

# MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES

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# MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES

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Edited by H. CARRINGTON LANCASTER

WILLIAM KURRELMeyer

RAYMOND D. HAVENS

KEMP MALONE

C. S. SINGLETON

CHARLES R. ANDERSON

DON CAMERON ALLEN

## Advisory Editors

E. Feise, Grace Frank, J. C. French, E. Malakis, R. B. Roulston, Pedro Salinas,  
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## POE AS A LITERARY CRITIC

BY JOHN ESTEN COOKE

Edited with an introduction and notes

By N. BRYLLION FAGIN

This essay by the Virginia novelist John Esten Cooke, written a century ago, has just been published for the first time. It was discovered in a private collection and has now been edited with an introduction and notes by N. Bryllion Fagin of the John Hopkins University. Written immediately after Poe's death, the essay contains a vivid sketch of Poe as a lecturer and reflects contemporary opinion on Poe's life and work. This is a rare item of interest to all Poe collectors, libraries, and teachers of American literature. A facsimile of a page of the MS. is printed as a frontispiece. Price \$1.00.

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## THE FREUDIAN READING OF *THE TURN* OF *THE SCREW*

The Freudian reading of Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw*, which has had some currency in recent decades, does violence not only to the story but also to the Preface, which, like the story, demands scrupulous attention. The Freudian reading was first given public expression by Edna Kenton in 1924; her view is that the ghosts and the attendant horrors are imagined by the neurotic governess, "trying to harmonize her own disharmonies by creating discords outside herself."<sup>1</sup> Miss Kenton, however, adduces almost no evidence to sustain her interpretation, but simply enjoys a gracefully gleeful revel in the conviction that James, by permitting the ghosts to seem real, has utterly fooled all the other readers of the story. She is sure that this is so because of James's prefatory remark upon his intention "to catch those not easily caught";<sup>2</sup> but all James is doing in the passage quoted from is relishing—and deservedly, we may say—the success, with adult audiences, of what he modestly calls a "fairy-tale pure and simple";<sup>3</sup> he is talking about nothing more—as if this is not enough—than his having evoked the willing suspension of disbelief in those who by situation and experience might be supposed to be more than ordinarily skeptical. His tone is simply not that of one who has proudly hoaxed the credulous; it is that of one meditating upon an aesthetic problem. He points out, shrewdly, that the way to create

<sup>1</sup> "Henry James to the Ruminant Reader, *The Arts*, vi (1924), 254.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*, pp. 248, 251. The passage Miss Kenton quotes appears in *The Novels and Tales of Henry James*, New York Edition (1922), xii, xviii. Subsequent references to preface and story are to this volume.

<sup>3</sup> P. xvi.

belief in "portentous evil" is to present an undefined evil to the reader's imagination.<sup>4</sup> Miss Kenton, most oddly, considers this choice of method a validation of her own definition of the evil.<sup>5</sup> The dispassionate judge must conclude: *non sequitur*.

A decade or so later Edmund Wilson sets out to provide what we might call the scholarly foundation for the airy castle of Miss Kenton's intuitions: in an essay entitled "The Ambiguity of Henry James" he sets forth an astonishingly *unambiguous* exegesis of *The Turn of the Screw*.<sup>6</sup> Wilson also misreads the preface—most conspicuously in the explanation, essential to his own case, that James, when he says he has given the governess "authority," means "the relentless English 'authority' which enables her to put over on inferiors even purposes which are totally deluded. . . ."<sup>7</sup> It must be said unequivocally: James *means nothing of the kind*. In the context<sup>8</sup> he is talking merely about technical problems of composition, and what he is saying is, to use the trite terms of the rhetoric book, that he is telling the story entirely from the governess's point of view. What is involved, too, is his general theory that the raw materials of the ghost story, to be effective, must be presented through a recording and interpreting consciousness; prodigies "keep all their character, . . . by looming through some other history—the indispensable history of somebody's *normal* [the italics are James's] relation to something."<sup>9</sup> Once again, then, the word *authority* has brought about, in an unwary liberal, an emotional spasm which has resulted in a kind of hysterical blindness. James explains his inability to characterize the governess fully: it was enough of an aesthetic task to present the "young woman's keeping crystalline her record of so many intense anomalies and obscurities—by which I don't of course mean her explanation of them, a different matter; . . ."<sup>10</sup> In the last clause James is merely, as a part of the statement of the technical problem, distinguishing two phases of the material presented through the governess—the phenomena she had observed, and her commentary

<sup>4</sup> Pp. xx-xxii.

<sup>5</sup> Pp. 254-55.

<sup>6</sup> *The Triple Thinkers* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1938), pp. 122 ff.

<sup>7</sup> P. 131.

<sup>8</sup> Pp. xviii-xix.

<sup>9</sup> The issue is discussed at length in the preface to *The Altar of the Dead, Novels and Tales*, ed. cit., xvii, xvii ff. The sentence quoted is on p. xix.

<sup>10</sup> P. xix.

upon them. Yet Wilson supposes that James is here giving it away that the governess has hallucinations!<sup>11</sup> Wilson then continues with a general conclusion about the story that runs counter to a major statement of the preface—a statement which Wilson simply ignores. He insists that the story is “primarily intended as a characterization of the governess: . . .”<sup>12</sup> James says flatly, “. . . I saw no way, . . . to exhibit her in relations other than those; one of which, precisely, would have been her relation to her own nature.”<sup>13</sup> Besides, James makes this statement even more unequivocally in a letter to H. G. Wells in 1898:

Of course I had, about my young woman, to take a very sharp line. The grotesque business I had to make her picture and the childish psychology I had to make her trace and present, were for me at least, a very difficult job, in which absolute lucidity and logic, a singleness of effect, were imperative. Therefore I had to rule out subjective complications of her own—play of tone etc.; and keep her impersonal save for the most obvious and indispensable little note of neatness, firmness and courage—without which she wouldn't have had her data.<sup>14</sup>

Here James not only explicitly states that the governess is not his subject but also gives his word for it that the phenomena to which she plays the part of recording consciousness are objective.

Wilson says he knew an actual case of a governess who frightened parents and children because of her psychological difficulties.<sup>15</sup> But James writes, in both Preface and letter, of a story he heard about the ghosts of “bad” servants which appeared in an effort to “get hold of” young children.<sup>16</sup> We must decide whether James is writing about what he heard about or what Wilson heard about. Indeed, the sly Freudian readers of the Preface—who ignore the letters entirely—seem to miss its whole tone and import: James speaks continually of the ghosts as if they are objective manifestations, and there is no sign whatever of a knowing wink to the rationalists.<sup>17</sup> He is concerned almost entirely with defining his

<sup>11</sup> P. 130.

<sup>12</sup> P. 131.

<sup>13</sup> P. xix.

<sup>14</sup> Percy Lubbock, ed., *The Letters of Henry James* (New York: Scribner, 1920), I, 299.

<sup>15</sup> P. 131.

<sup>16</sup> P. xv. In 1898 he wrote Arthur C. Benson an account of the original telling of the story to him by Arthur's father, Archbishop Benson (*Letters*, I, 278-280).

<sup>17</sup> What happens in the story is exactly described by Graham Greene's

technical problems and with observing, almost gaily, how satisfactorily they have been met.

The Freudians misread the internal evidence almost as valiantly as they do the external. In the story, of course, there are passages that it is possible to read ambivalently; but the determining unambiguous passages from which the critic might work are so plentiful that it seems hardly good critical strategy to use the ambiguous ones as points of departure, to treat them as if they were unambiguous, and to roughride over the immitigable difficulties that then arise. We cannot examine all the passages to which Wilson does violence, but a consideration of several of them will show how wobbly his case is.

Wilson supposes the governess to be seeing ghosts because she is in a psychopathic state originating in a repressed passion for the master.<sup>18</sup> In view of the terrible outcome of the story, we should at best have to suspect the fallacy of insufficient cause. But the cause does not exist at all: the governess's feelings for the master are never repressed: they are wholly in the open and are joyously talked about: even in the opening section<sup>19</sup> which precedes Chapter 1, we are told that she is in love with him. There is no faint trace of the initial situation necessary to produce the distortion of personality upon which Wilson's analysis depends. But Wilson does compel us to consider one point: why does James emphasize the governess's fascinated devotion to the master? For an important technical reason: it is the only way of motivating—although it is probably not quite successful—the governess's stubborn refusal to take the logical step of over-riding the master's irresponsible wish not to be bothered and of calling him in.<sup>20</sup> The master's presence

shrewd general remark on James: "James believed in the supernatural, but he saw evil as an equal force with good," in *The English Novelists: A Survey of the Novel by Twenty Contemporary Novelists*, ed. Derek Verschoyle (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1936), p. 245.

<sup>18</sup> P. 122.

<sup>19</sup> Pp. 150 ff. Cf. also the outright admission of Chapter 1 (p. 162); and the clear implications of the phrase "in the right quarter" (p. 199) and of the governess's self-analysis at the end of Chapter 12 (pp. 239-240). She can even be laughingly, not tensely, ironic about the uncle's inattentiveness to her (p. 287).

<sup>20</sup> See Chapters 12 and 13. James's honesty with his reader appears in his presenting so fully the governess's unwillingness to call the uncle. In order to strengthen our impression of the uncle's power to fascinate, James

would change the situation and the focus and thus the whole story which James had planned. His absence is a datum: James wrote to Dr. Louis Waldstein in 1898, "But ah, the exposure indeed, the helpless plasticity of childhood that isn't dear or sacred to *somebody*. That *was* my little tragedy— . . ." <sup>21</sup> It is possible to argue that James's strategy is faulty; indeed, that he himself sensed the weakness of the governess's not calling the master is suggested by the retrospective irony with which he makes her comment upon her rash assumption of adequacy to the situation. <sup>22</sup> But a technical procedure should not be mistaken for a psychopathological clue.

When the governess describes the ghost to Mrs. Grose, Mrs. Grose identifies it with Quint, the dead valet, whom the governess had never so much as heard of; and Mrs. Grose gives him—and later Miss Jessel—a character which is entirely consistent with what the governess has already inferred about the moral quality and intentions of the ghost. <sup>23</sup> There can be no firmer dramatic evidence of the objectivity of the apparition, and Wilson acknowledges the difficulty: but in order to sustain his contention that the hallucination grows out of the repressed passion for the uncle, he advances the incredible hypothesis that the governess has got master and man

even suggests that Mrs. Grose has felt that power: *she* too had not informed him of former goings-on at Bly (p. 261). Compare a further comment of hers (p. 162).

<sup>21</sup> *Letters*, I, 297.

<sup>22</sup> There is a consistent ironic undertone. It is unmistakable in such phrases as "I was wonderful" (p. 172), "I brought the thing out handsomely" (p. 277), "—oh I was grand!—" (p. 297), and "But I was infatuated—I was blind with victory, . . ." (p. 306). Compare also the open acknowledgments in Chapter 16 (pp. 260-261). The story might have been developed as the tragedy of the teacher-protector, whose flaw is excessive confidence in his own abilities. The tragic quality of the governess, as well as several other points which I have made, is also suggested in *The New Invitation to Learning*, ed. Mark Van Doren (New York: New Home Library, 1944), pp. 223-35. Although the participants in the discussion—Katherine Anne Porter, Allen Tate, and Mark Van Doren—condemn the Freudian interpretation, they still believe that the evil is working *through* the governess. This seems to me to come uncomfortably close to the Freudian version.

<sup>23</sup> Chapters 5, 6, and 7. The breakdown of the Wilson theory at this point has already been discussed by A. J. A. Waldock, "Mr. Edmund Wilson and 'The Turn of the Screw,'" *MLN*, 331-334 (May, 1947).



confused—which is inconsistent with her obviously having a sharp eye for distinctions—and that Quint and the uncle may look alike.<sup>24</sup> Even at his most unsubtle, James would hardly be found thus trafficking in coincidence. But if he were, it can hardly be supposed that Mrs. Grose, who in such matters is very observant, would not at some time comment upon the strange resemblance of master and man.

Like Miss Kenton, Wilson infers the unreality of the ghosts from the fact that *only* the governess acknowledges seeing them; he does not stop to consider that this fact may be wholly explicable in aesthetic terms. Of course Mrs. Grose does not see the ghosts: she is the good but slow-witted woman who sees only the obvious in life—for instance, the sexual irregularity of Quint and Miss Jessel—but does not unassisted detect the subtler manifestations of evil. She is the plain domestic type who is the foil for the sensitive, acute governess—Cassandra-like in the insight which outspeeds the perceptions of those about her—whose ideal function is to penetrate and shape the soul. James's fondness for allegorical names is commonplace knowledge: Mrs. Grose is not called Mrs. *Grose* for nothing<sup>25</sup> (just as the governess is not the governess for nothing: the narrator exhibits the ideal function of the tutorial type).<sup>26</sup> But as, little by little, the tangible evidence, such as that of Flora's language, corroborates the racing intuitions of the governess, Mrs. Grose comes to grasp the main points of the issue as it is seen totally by the governess and to share her understanding of the moral atmosphere. The acceptance by Mrs. Grose is unimpeachable substantiation. We ought to observe here, also, how carefully the governess records all the initial doubts felt by Mrs. Grose in each new crisis—doubts which at times shake her belief in her own mental soundness.<sup>26</sup> This is one of James's ways of establishing the reliability of the governess.

As for the children's appearing not to see the apparitions: this is one of the author's finest artistic strokes. James says that he wants to evoke a sense of evil: one of his basic ways of doing it is the suggestion, by means of the symbolic refusal to acknowledge

<sup>24</sup> Pp. 125-26.

<sup>25</sup> "But she was a magnificent monument to the blessing of a want of imagination, . . ." (p. 230).

<sup>26</sup> Note pp. 168-69, 204, 230-231, 278 (" . . . so I was neither cruel nor mad"), 280-81, 290-91.

the ghosts, of a sinisterly mature concealment of evil. But almost as if to guard against the mistaking of the denial of the ghosts for the non-existence of the ghosts, James takes care to buttress our sense of the reality of evil from another direction: he gives us the objective fact of the dismissal of Miles from school—a dismissal which is unexplained and which is absolutely final.<sup>27</sup> This dismissal Wilson, in plain defiance of the text, must attempt to put aside as of no consequence; of such a situation he says, indeed frivolously, that the governess “colors [it], on no evidence at all, with a significance somehow sinister.”<sup>28</sup> James invests the letter from the school with further significance by the fact that, despite her real shock, which is elaborated later, Mrs. Grose finds a private meaning in the dismissal—“She gave me a look that I remarked at the moment; then, visibly, with a quick blankness, seemed to try to take it back”;<sup>29</sup> so, unless we are to repudiate the governess’s testimony entirely, the letter gains dramatic value through what it intimates to Mrs. Grose. Further, Wilson cannot deal with the fact that at the end of the final scene Miles, without hearing them spoken by anyone else, speaks the names of Miss Jessel and Quint and indicates his belief that they may be present. Again in plain defiance of the text Wilson says that Miles has managed to see Flora before her departure and thus to find out what the governess is thinking about.<sup>30</sup> Wilson says they met; James clearly indicates that they did not. But even if they had met, their meeting would not help Wilson especially. From Flora Miles might have learned the name “Miss Jessel”; but his spontaneous bursting forth with “Peter Quint” would still have to be explained.

Wilson admits that one point is inexplicable: the “gust of frozen air” felt by the governess when, at Miles’s bedside, her effort to break down his moral resistance to her is interrupted by his shriek, a shaking of the room, and sudden darkness.<sup>31</sup> Despite her feeling a strong blast, no window is open. Wilson takes literally Miles’s statement that he turned out the light and suggests that the motive is shame at having to tell about his disgrace at school. But, for one thing, Miles *does not tell* about his disgrace, and, more important, his turning out the light of his own accord is absolutely

<sup>27</sup> Pp. 165-66.

<sup>28</sup> P. 165.

<sup>29</sup> P. 123.

<sup>30</sup> P. 129.

<sup>31</sup> Pp. 127-28. The scene discussed is at the end of Chapter 17.

incompatible with the theory that the governess is unbalanced. If she is unbalanced we must assume, at this stage of the story, that the children sense her disorder and are humoring her and treating her very carefully, not engaging in violent pranks that might be expected to be dangerously aggravating.

There are still other parts of the story that, on the Freudian hypothesis, are wholly inexplicable. First, as we have seen, is the fact that Mrs. Grose always comes into agreement with the governess—an agreement that is especially forceful because it usually follows upon doubt and hesitation.<sup>32</sup> Further—and this is a very large point—the Freudian hypothesis fails completely to deal with the conduct of the children. In the first place, their night-time escapades<sup>33</sup> are, for an eight- and a ten-year-old, virtually beyond the bounds of physical possibility. Wilson says blandly that the children “are able to give plausible explanations of their behavior”;<sup>34</sup> but the fact is that children of that age simply are not wide awake, imaginatively alert, and capable of strategic maneuvering in the middle of the night. The fact that they are earnestly and imperturbably plotting in the middle of the night, and that they are sophisticatedly evasive in their gay response to questioning, is one of James’s subtlest ways of suggesting moral disorder. What Wilson takes to be their “plausibility” is an index of their corruption. Second, the children’s daytime conduct makes sense only in the light of the ostensible meaning of the story—the entertainment of the governess by one of them while the other escapes, Flora’s difficult solitary trip on the final Sunday afternoon, her crossing the pond in a boat and hiding the boat apparently unaided (“All alone—that child?” exclaims Mrs. Grose),<sup>35</sup> her majestically non-committal manner when she is found strangely alone at a considerable distance from the house.<sup>36</sup> Wilson simply ignores all these matters—ignores them as facts, and of course as the brilliant

<sup>32</sup> The corroborative value of Mrs. Grose’s information on the past and of her establishing of connections between past and present cannot be questioned at all in terms of the theory of ambiguity. To dispose of her evidence, the psychological critic must impugn the veracity of the governess from beginning to end. But such a method would completely dissolve the story by leaving us no dependable facts for investigation. Moreover, it would ignore the sense in which James gives the governess “authority.”

<sup>33</sup> Chapter 10.

<sup>34</sup> P. 126.

<sup>35</sup> P. 275.

<sup>36</sup> Chapters 18, 19, and 20.

dramatic symbols they are of something unchildlike and inexplicably wrong. Third, there is the vulgarity of Flora's language after the governess has openly asked her about Miss Jessel—important evidence which can be intended only to show a temporarily concealed deterioration of character coming at last to the surface. Notably, too, it is Mrs. Grose who tells about this language and who, what is more, initiates the subject: "horrors," she calls what she has heard, showing no sign of suggestive pressure from the governess.<sup>37</sup> Further, the whole manner of the children is incompatible with their being terrified and perverted by the "authority" of the governess. What is inescapable in them, despite the admirable subtlety with which all this is conveyed, is precisely their freedom, their skill in spending their time as they wish without open challenges, their marvelously disciplined catering to the governess—or appearing to do so—while doing exactly what they please. After Flora's departure what the governess especially feels is the slenderness of her personal, and the disappearance of her official, hold upon the boy.<sup>38</sup> At no time do the children show any sign of unwillingness, compulsion, or fright—except in the final scene, in which Miles's fright, it seems logical to suppose, proceeds from the causes which the story says it does. In fact, James emphasizes strongly the falseness of Flora's apparent fear of the governess at the end by giving her a "grand manner about it" and having her ask "every three minutes" whether the governess is coming in and express a desire "never again to so much as look at you."<sup>39</sup> These are signs of artifice, not fright; they indicate self-conscious acting, righteous indignation strategically adopted, the truculence of the guilty person who still seeks loopholes.

Such evidence suggests that a great deal of unnecessary mystery has been made of the apparent ambiguity of the story. Actually, most of it is a by-product of James's method: his indirection; his refusal, in his fear of anti-climax, to define the evil; his rigid adherence to point of view; his refusal—amused, perhaps?—to break that point of view for a reassuring comment on those uncomfortable characters, the apparitions. This theory seems to come very close to James's own view of the ambiguity, upon which, it con-

<sup>37</sup> P. 289.

<sup>38</sup> See especially paragraph two of Chapter 22 (pp. 294-95).

<sup>39</sup> Pp. 286-87.

veniently happens, he commented in the year of the story's appearance.<sup>40</sup> The disturbing ghosts, of course, are to be taken as symbolic,<sup>41</sup> a fact which the modern critic might easily grasp if he did not have to wrestle with another problem peculiarly uncongenial to modernity—the drama of salvation. The retreat into abnormal psychology is virtually predictable.

There is a final irony, however: if he does not break the chosen point of view, James at least does not adopt it until his main story is under way. At the start, then, we see behind the curtain and find important objective evidence for use in interpreting the governess's narrative. Now Miss Kenton, with considerable amusement at less observant readers, has discovered what she calls "the submerged and disregarded foreword,"<sup>42</sup> and what she has got from it is that the governess is in love with the master. Hence her whole interpretation. But had Miss Kenton herself read the foreword more observantly, she would have found the evidence that makes her interpretation untenable. For this initial section tells us what the governess was like some years later.

The governess, Wilson assures us,<sup>43</sup> "has literally frightened him [Miles] to death": the neurotic approaches criminal insanity. For such an individual, only the gravest kind of prognosis could be made. We might expect progressive deterioration, perhaps pathetic, perhaps horrible. We might barely conceive of a "cure," but we could hardly expect that it would obliterate all traces of the earlier disastrous tensions. What, then, does happen to the governess who at twenty is supposedly in so terrible a neurotic state? The prologue tells us explicitly: at the age of thirty or so she is still a spinster, still a governess, and therefore still heir, we may assume,

<sup>40</sup> To F. W. H. Myers, one of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research, James writes that he cannot give "any coherent account of my small inventions 'after the fact.' . . . The one thing and another that are questionable and ambiguous in them I mostly take to be conditions of their having got themselves pushed through at all" (*Letters*, I, 300).

<sup>41</sup> In *The Supernatural in the Writings of Henry James* (Unpublished Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1939), Benjamin Carroll acutely discusses the use of the symbolic ghost as a general practice of James, and the kind of "authority" which James gives to his narrators—the authority of the observing and recording consciousness which is central in his method.

<sup>42</sup> P. 251.

<sup>43</sup> P. 130.



to all psychic ills which Wilson imputes to her at the earlier stage. But at this age she seems, to a Cambridge undergraduate whom, ten years her junior, we may expect to be thoroughly critical, a fine, gracious woman who can elicit liking and respect. She charms him so thoroughly that many years later he in no way repudiates, qualifies, or smiles at his youthful feeling. Many years later, in fact he can still say of her,

She was a most charming person. . . . She was the most agreeable person I've ever known in her position; she would have been worthy of any whatever . . . she struck me as awfully clever and nice. . . . I liked her extremely and am glad to this day to think she liked me too.<sup>44</sup>

To challenge this characterization of her one would have to challenge the testimony of a poised and graceful middle-aged gentleman; and, in addition to that, the testimony of the perceptive first-person narrator in the prologue, who is completely *en rapport* with the middle-aged gentleman. James's unqualified initial picture of the governess, then, is wholly irreconcilable with the Freudian interpretation of her. The conclusion is obvious: at twenty the governess was, aside from her unusual sensitiveness and charm, a perfectly normal person.<sup>45</sup>

*The Turn of the Screw* may seem a somewhat slight work to call forth all the debate. But there is something to be said for the debate. For one thing, it may point the danger of a facile, doctrinaire application of formulae where they have no business and hence compel either an ignoring of, or a gross distortion of, the materials. But more immediately: *The Turn of the Screw* is worth saving. Wilson turns the story into a commonplace clinical record, at the same time feeling—in one of the loveliest ironies of contemporary criticism—that he is giving it stature. He complacently announces that “the story, on any other hypothesis, would be, . . . the only thing James ever wrote which did not have some more or less serious point.”<sup>46</sup> But his interpretation is,

<sup>44</sup> Pp. 149-50.

<sup>45</sup> Commenting upon the technique of this novel, the able critic R. P. Blackmur remarks quite casually that the evil “had to be represented, . . . in the consciousness of it of normal persons” (introduction to Henry James, *The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces*, New York and London: Scribner, 1937, p. xxi).

<sup>46</sup> P. 131.

in the words of Philip Rahv, a "fallacy of rationalism";<sup>47</sup> for the story has a very serious point indeed. *The Turn*, F. O. Matthiessen says, illustrates James's "extraordinary command of his own kind of darkness, . . . the darkness of moral evil."<sup>48</sup> The darkness is not obvious: Miss Kenton has fittingly laughed some of the simpler didacticisms out of court. How it is to be defined is another problem, at least part of the answer to which may be found in James's extraordinarily suggestive use of language.

In a subsequent *obiter dictum* on *The Turn of the Screw* Wilson seems to hedge somewhat and to modify the rigor of his earlier pronouncement.<sup>49</sup> Thus he suggests the flexibility which makes him, at his best, a very good critic. But his capacity for doctrinaire inflexibility deserves a word because it tells us something about the intellectual climate in which he works. In that climate there is so strong a suspicion of the kind of elements that are central in *The Turn of the Screw*—salvation, the supernatural, evil as an absolute—that the critic ripened in the climate runs into a mental block: he is compelled to find a "scientific" way around these irrationalities; and in doing so he is likely to lose sight of the proper imaginative values. We run again into the familiar clash between scientific and imaginative truth. This is not to say that scientific truth may not collaborate with, subserve, and even throw light upon imaginative truth; but it is to say that the scientific prepossession may seriously impede the imaginative insight. Wilson, for instance, is downright embarrassing in his occasional paeans, in *The New Yorker*, to books about animals, which, he goes out of his way to tell us, with James Harvey Robinson assurance, will really throw light upon the human, i. e., the spiritual, situation. Even in Wilson's formal critical essays the psychologist is likely to defeat the aesthete. In "Dickens: The Two Scrooges" Wilson's literary judgments tend to tag along behind the operations

<sup>47</sup> *The Great Short Novels of Henry James* (New York: Dial, 1944), p. 624. Mr. Rahv also makes the excellent point that the Freudian interpretation is so commonplace as to make the story less than interesting, that it "reduces the intention to a minimum."

<sup>48</sup> *Henry James: The Major Phase* (New York: Oxford, 1944), p. 94. For a series of similar comments see the already quoted essay by Graham Greene in *The English Novelists*, pp. 231-46 *passim*.

<sup>49</sup> *The New Yorker*, May 27, 1944, p. 69.

(and these are often shrewd enough) of the psychoanalyst.<sup>50</sup> But some watchful spirit—the opponent, we may assume, of Quint and Miss Jessel—saw to it that Wilson, in sending into the world the volume containing the Dickens essay, took its title from, and gave its final pages to, his essay on the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles. Of Sophocles we know so little that there is no opening for the psychologist; Wilson sticks to the drama itself; and his explication of it is masterly.<sup>51</sup>

ROBERT B. HEILMAN

Louisiana State University

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### THE FIFTH GOSPEL

(As projected in the novel, *The Legend of Thomas Didymus*, by James Freeman Clarke).

In 1881, Dr. James Freeman Clarke, prominent New England minister, lecturer and author, published his novel, *The Legend of Thomas Didymus, The Jewish Sceptic*. This is written as a biographical account by the Apostle Thomas who describes the conditions in the Holy Land during the early part of the first century; the character and activities of Christ; and his own life and development. In this last respect the novel differs most from the Gospels of the other disciples, for it is Thomas, rather than Jesus, who is the principal figure.

Clarke's main sources are readily apparent. The original inspiration for his work was probably DeWette's novel, *Theodore, or the Sceptic's Conversion*, which Clarke had translated, in 1841, for George Ripley's *Specimens of Foreign Literature*.<sup>1</sup> Both *Thomas Didymus* and *Theodore* are "Entwickelungsromane." They treat the moral and spiritual development of a young man who was raised

<sup>50</sup> *The Wound and the Bow: Seven Studies in Literature* (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin, 1941), pp. 1-104. The same psychological materials, while given due emphasis, are somewhat more firmly disciplined in Dame Una Pope-Hennessy's *Charles Dickens* (New York: Howell, Soskin, 1946).

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 272 ff.

<sup>1</sup> The translation of *Theodore* was begun in 1836 and the first part of the novel appeared serially in *The Western Messenger* from 1836 to 1839. The completed translation became the tenth and eleventh volumes of the Ripley series.

in a conservative, religious atmosphere but loses the faith of his parents when his intellectual horizon is broadened by travel and study. Through further development, however, complicated and hastened by a serious love affair, he loses his doubts and uncertainties and achieves a sound religious philosophy. Both novels present a detailed description of the social and religious background of the milieu in which the action transpires.

In his treatment of Christ, Clarke was greatly influenced by Karl Hase's *Leben Jesu*, which he also translated and published in 1860.<sup>2</sup> In his book, Hase strove to present an open-minded rational view of Jesus and, although his narrative is sympathetic, the scientific, analytical attitude is always present. "Reverence for the character of Jesus," wrote Clarke concerning *Leben Jesu*, "is combined with a cool sifting of all of the Gospel statements concerning him."<sup>3</sup> Through the eyes of his Jewish sceptic, Clarke sketches Christ essentially as Hase does, and in the same unprejudiced manner. In respect to the New Testament accounts there were in America two groups, representing two extremes; those who accepted the Gospel stories literally; and those who, unable to accept all of the miraculous events narrated by the disciples, refused to believe in any of them. Philosophically Clarke believed in miracles, but, as a critic, he examined each one separately, admitting most of them as genuine supernatural phenomena, but rejecting some because of insufficient evidence. This, too, was the attitude of Hase.

The chief interest of *Thomas Didymus*, however, is not intrinsic, but due rather to the circumstances under which it was to have been published. The discovery five years ago of the original preface revealed the fact that Clarke had originally intended to publish the work anonymously as a translation through the German of a recently unearthed Syriac manuscript, with the suggestion that this was perhaps an authentic Gospel written by the disciple, Thomas. Such a publication would undoubtedly have created a sensation throughout America and, since the deceptive idea was very cleverly presented in the preface and well-executed in the story itself, probably would have found wide-spread credence, at least temporarily.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Hase, *The Life of Jesus*. Translated from the German by James Freeman Clarke (Boston: Wather, Wise, 1860).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Preface.

Tracing the work to Clarke only would have made it seem the more authentic, since he was known as a translator and had never previously written a novel. In addition, Clarke was so highly respected that there would have been little or no suspicion of his integrity in the matter until the story had been completely investigated. Fortunately for his reputation, if not for the sale of the book, Clarke decided against the hoax and published the narrative as his own work. His first intention, however, is revealed in the original, hitherto unpublished preface to *The Legend of Thomas Didymus, The Jewish Sceptic*.<sup>4</sup>

#### Preface

by the American Editor

The remarkable book, now for the first time offered to the American Reader, purports to be a translation through the German from a Syriac Ms. found among the remnants of the Christians of St. Thomas, in Malabar. The story is that a certain German traveller on that coast, on penetrating into the interior, encountered a small community apparently Hindoos, and in dress & appearance as well as language, resembling the military caste, to which they seemed to belong. He had occasion to remain near them, pursuing some archeological studies in a Jaina ruin, and might never have discovered their real character, had he not one day saved from death one of their children who had fallen into a tank among these ruins, while at play. The gratitude of the father brought him nearer to his benefactor, and he then learned that this little community considered themselves Christians—though having no sympathy with Roman Catholics or Protestants. Herr Schleicher at last came to the conclusion that they were the remains of an old Nestorian body, who had taken refuge in this retirement & concealment at the time of the cruel persecutions by the Portuguese when they established their Inquisition at Goa. The narrative goes on to say that, seeing the interest taken by Herr Schleicher in antiquities, the Hindoo brought to him one day a Mss. roll in an ancient language, which he said had been long in the possession of the community, and was regarded as a kind of talisman, though none of them were able to read it. Herr Schleicher obtained leave to copy it, and occupied several months in so doing; a most difficult task, as many passages were wholly or partially obliterated, and as he was utterly ignorant of the characters,

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<sup>4</sup>On the cover containing the manuscript of the preface is written, "Original preface to Thomas Didymus (not printed)." The manuscript, together with a great deal of other Clarke material, was found by the author in a storeroom at the home of Clarke's grandson, Mr. James F. Clarke, of Boston. The Clarke papers will soon be turned over to the Harvard College Library.



though perceiving that they belonged to the Semetic family of languages. On his return to Germany he submitted his copy to a learned professor, who discovered that it was written in a peculiar form of Syriac—and the present translation is the result.

This is the statement. Of course it has been severely criticised, and the whole story disbelieved. The arguments against the truth of this narrative are numerous, of which the principal are as follows.

1. It is admitted that the language of the copy is one affiliated to the ancient Syriac—but it is argued that no other writing of that exact character exists, and no Mss. of such extreme antiquity—and that it is highly improbable that it could have been preserved so long amid the social storms and revolutions which have swept over India.

2. It is argued still more forcibly that the whole style, both of the thoughts and expressions, is essentially modern. It seems like a rather poor attempt to imitate the Bible simplicity of style. The character of Miriam especially, and the feeling of Thomas toward her, are said to be wholly unlike anything known to antiquity.

3. It is not likely that the Apostle Thomas could have been so well acquainted with Greek literature, or have been so well-educated a man as he appears in this Mss.

4. The whole story seems more like a modern romance than an ancient biography. Certain anachronisms and mistakes in proper names have also been pointed out by the critics. The Christology of the book is also stated to be that of modern Rationalism, or Rational-Spiritualism; and not that of the New Testament. Hence it is contended that this book is probably a rather clever attempt of a modern writer to put himself into the position of the Apostle, and to see Christ from his standpoint.

To these arguments, the defenders of the genuineness of the book reply as follows—

1. The generation which has seen the ancient papyri and monuments of Egypt decyphered; which has been enabled for the first time to read the arrow-headed inscriptions of Cyrus and Xerxes; which has dug up a whole library of literature buried for three-thousand years at Nineveh; which has rediscovered ancient Troy, and Argos, and has brought to light the very crowns and bracelets worn by Agamemnon and Clytemnestra; has no right to be too sceptical in regard to the possibility of further discoveries. There are many Mss. in European libraries taken from Egyptian tombs, which were written fifteen-hundred or two-thousand years before the time of St. Thomas. It is well known that in A. D. 1625 some Chinese laborers disinterred a marble tablet, near the city Si-ngau-fou, covered with unknown characters, tracings from which were sent to Europe, and found to be a Nestorian Inscription in ancient Syriac, and to have been deposited by Nestorian Christians, A. D. 781. That another writing in this same language should have existed in India, is not too extraordinary for belief. That it should have remained unknown so long is not unlikely,

when we remember that the oldest Mss. of the New Testament known to exist (written in the fourth century), was only discovered a few years ago by Tischendorff in the Convent of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai; a place which had been repeatedly searched in vain by European scholars, and by Tischendorff himself several years before.

Here the preface breaks off, leaving the three remaining arguments against the validity of the manuscript still to be countered. Whether Clarke suddenly realized the hopelessness of the deception and did not complete the preface, or whether it was completed and the concluding pages were lost, I could not discover. Although the circumstances surrounding the production of most of Clarke's works are revealed in his correspondence, agenda lists for his secretary, or other private papers, I was unable to find the slightest mention of *Thomas Didymus*. This, of course, is not surprising considering the necessity of secrecy attending the project. Clarke's reasons for considering such a hoax, however, can readily be surmised from statements in his theological works. He believed in the general truth of the Gospel accounts but he also believed that inaccuracies had been introduced by the writers or subsequent copyists as a result of confusing fact and legend. These implausible, and sometimes conflicting bits of legend made the Bible story particularly vulnerable to the pitiless, scientific scrutiny of its foes. Clarke apparently sought to strengthen the simple, and perhaps superstitious account of Christ's life as presented in the first four Gospels by adding a fifth, the keenly analytical record of the sceptic, Thomas.

J. WESLEY THOMAS

*University of Michigan*

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## ZOLA'S ESTHETIC APPROACH AND THE COURTESAN

As is commonly known, it was never Zola's intention or purpose to emphasize the vulgar or pornographic for sensationalism. In point of fact, when Busnach<sup>1</sup> had adapted for the stage his *Nana*,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> William Busnach was Zola's favorite adapter. He first dramatized the latter's *L'Assommoir* in 1879. Some of the other works by Zola that were adapted for the stage by him are *Pot-Bouille* (1883) and *Le Ventre de Paris* (1887).

<sup>2</sup> Produced at the Ambigu-Comique (1881).

published in 1880, Zola decried not only the apparent immoral motivation but in addition the fact that among the "first-nighters" who had come to see reproduced on the boards erotic scenes—"des ordures"<sup>3</sup>—taken from his novel, were "filles sur le retour, souteneurs en gants blancs, hommes de plaisir et hommes de finance tombés au trottoir parisien,"<sup>4</sup> all of whom were, he writes, "devant leur propre pourriture."<sup>5</sup>

The oft-repeated belief that gives credence to the fallacious theory that Zola wanted to feed the appetites of the sensual is easily refuted by Zola's concepts of the *obscene* as well as of the *chaste* in literature. Obscene literature, says Zola, is "la littérature d'imagination libertine, qui *invente des ordures pour le plaisir*,<sup>6</sup> et sans aucun but d'enquête exacte," adding that "Nos analyses ne sauraient être obscènes, du moment où elles sont scientifiques et où elles apportent un document."<sup>7</sup> With the same thought process, Zola finds it therefore difficult to comprehend why the study of sex "dans ses vérités physiologiques, nous soit interdite comme une ordure presque infamante."<sup>8</sup>

If, therefore, the subject of *Nana*, which, treated by Zola in the novel, does depict the low, coarse and sensational by showing the love-life and intimacies of a courtesan, it is only because Zola is consciously applying some of his naturalistic theories, especially those pertaining to the deterministic influences of heredity and environment, in the quest for *Truth*.

With regard to his fetish for *Truth* and the scientific approach, he finds that only the naturalists "reprennent l'étude de la nature aux sources mêmes," adding that they "remplacent l'homme métaphysique par l'homme physiologique, et ne le séparent plus du milieu qui le détermine."<sup>9</sup>

In a word, Zola claims that "l'esprit scientifique porté dans toutes nos connaissances, est l'agent même du dix-neuvième siècle."<sup>10</sup> Indeed, in his *Le Roman Expérimental* (1880), Zola expresses the general theory of Naturalism and sees its triumph

<sup>3</sup> Emile Zola, *Une Campagne* (1880-1881), Paris, Bibliothèque-Charpentier, 1913, p. 152.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Italics mine.

<sup>7</sup> *Documents Littéraires*, ed. Maurice Le Blond, Paris, 1927, p. 312.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 293.

<sup>9</sup> *Une Campagne*, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

in the novel <sup>11</sup> which had emphasized local color, detail, observation rather than imagination, facts rather than truths. As a matter of fact, the scientific and experimental theories of heredity were applied by Zola himself in his huge *Rougon-Macquart* series, the first volume of which appeared in 1871.

However, perceiving that these Naturalistic tendencies triumphed in the novel but not in the theater, Zola, in his *Le Naturalisme au Théâtre*,<sup>12</sup> which appeared in 1881, formulated theories which would also bring the theater into line with Naturalism. In this work Zola declares: <sup>13</sup> "Il me semble impossible que nos sciences, notre nouvelle méthode d'analyse, notre roman, notre peinture, aient marché dans un sens nettement réaliste, et que notre théâtre reste seul, immobile, figé dans les traditions." Hence he believes it is necessary to find "une formule nouvelle, transformer le drame," since "chaque époque a sa formule."<sup>14</sup> This is especially necessary, says Zola, in view of the fact that the novel has already paved the way for the theater and since, furthermore, the public is now ripe for truth. Thus, the "new formula" would involve for the theater "l'étude de l'homme,"<sup>15</sup> not as an abstract type but as an individual considered as "réel, avec son sang et ses muscles," dependent upon "les milieux où naissent, vivent et meurent les personnages."<sup>16</sup> The real or naturalistic drama for Zola, then, would be "la bataille de la vie," in which human beings, "soumis aux faits," are inevitably found also "produisant les faits."<sup>17</sup>

Thus, in an article entitled "La Fille au Théâtre," written for *Le Figaro* on January 12, 1881,<sup>18</sup> Zola justly points out in a brief historical discussion that, beginning with Hugo's *Marion Delorme*, in which the heroine was not studied "dans son tempérament personnel et dans son action propre, faite par le milieu et agissant sur ce milieu," and in which she was simply "un type généralisé" or "une idée," dramatists had all been concerned with demonstrating

<sup>11</sup> Many of the novels of the Goncourt brothers, such as *Sœur Philomène* (1861), *Renée Mauperin* (1864), and *Germinie Lacerteux* (1865), show the preference of these authors for the exceptional and the pathological as well as an interest in low-life.

<sup>12</sup> Nouvelle Edition, Paris, Eugène Fasquelle, 1923.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236.

<sup>18</sup> This article is also to be found as a separate chapter in *Une Campagne*, *op. cit.*

the thesis that "la fille . . . est un ange, ou elle est un démon." The thesis or point of view is what is of primary importance to these dramatists, says Zola, "au lieu d'interroger d'abord la réalité des faits et d'accepter les documents." In no case, therefore, prior to his contemporaries does Zola see a "peinture vraie de la courtisane."<sup>19</sup> For further corroboration of this theory, Zola refers to a statement made by Dumas  *fils*  to the effect that "jamais le public ne tolérera une femme ayant deux amants à la fois, ou passant de l'un à l'autre."<sup>20</sup> This, according to Zola, "rend la peinture de la fille impossible," and explains why no one "ne nous a montré la fille dans son rôle de fille" and also that "ils ne nous donnent que le passé de la fille."<sup>21</sup>

And since, moreover, Zola believes that now the public is "mûr pour la vérité," why not, he goes on to suggest, recognize the fact that "presque toujours, elle [la fille moderne] se présente comme une force inconsciente" and not as *typical* of either Marion Delorme, Marguerite Gautier, Marco or Olympe.<sup>22</sup>

In other words, if the courtesan "corrompt et désorganise," it is not, declares Zola, "comme une traîtresse de mélodrame, mais comme un ferment de pourriture, que la société dépose elle-même et qu'elle laisse ensuite germer et grandir." In more concrete terms, "le milieu fait la fille, qui plus tard, par une action réflexe, gâte le milieu." And therein, furthermore, according to Zola, is to be

<sup>19</sup> Yet, it should be pointed out in all fairness that the dramatists did treat the *cocotte* throughout the period of the Second Empire and beyond it in complete frankness, showing her as a type that mixes with the wealthy and whose main interest is money. She is, in a word, depicted as a professional courtesan. In this connection see my study, *The 'Courtisane' in the French Theatre from Hugo to Becque (1831-1885)* (The Johns Hopkins Studies in Romance Literatures and Languages, Extra vol. xxii), The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1947.

<sup>20</sup> *Une Campagne*, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* The significance of this becomes all the clearer in the statement made by Zola in the Preface he had written for Busnach's dramatic adaptation of his *Nana* and which can also be found in his *Une Campagne*, *op. cit.*, p. 155: "Malgré toutes les concessions, la pièce restera le premier essai de la fille vraie au théâtre. Et je parle de la fille dans son rôle de fille, avec le débraillé de sa vie, le galop de ses amants, ses coups de cœur et ses cruautés, son inconscience des catastrophes qu'elle détermine à chaque pas."

<sup>22</sup> "La Fille au Théâtre," *loc. cit.*



found "tout le problème scientifique de la prostitution."<sup>23</sup> Hence, applying the dramatic implications of the above theories, Zola claims that "notre comédie moderne meurt d'honnêteté,"<sup>24</sup> and advocates a completely frank and true depiction on the stage of all themes, even though it be, or rather *because* it is, a question of a vice: "Ce que je demande plus énergiquement encore, c'est que, lorsqu'on vient clouer un vice à la scène, on l'y cloue carrément, fortement, sans l'enguirlander de tous les poncifs des vertus consolantes."<sup>25</sup>

In urging the authors to expose the existing vices without regard to the sensibilities of some, Zola, the high priest of the Naturalistic school, feels that it would be "lâche de reculer devant certains problèmes sous le prétexte qu'ils sont troublants."<sup>26</sup> Rather Zola sees in the depiction of the shocking a clinical means of checking the unwholesome and unsalutary for society. It is this aspect, too, which constitutes a Zolaesque *morale* as a naturalistic credo as well as a positive, constructive correction of conditions that are evil.

Indeed, Zola views "la morale" as "la connaissance exacte des faits,"<sup>27</sup> claiming that the idealistic approach to reality presupposes "qu'il est nécessaire de mentir pour être moral," while the naturalists "affirment qu'on ne saurait être moral en dehors du vrai."<sup>28</sup> What, according to Zola, is the rôle and purpose of "la morale moderne" can be summarized as follows: "Notre morale est celle que Claude Bernard a si nettement définie: 'La morale moderne recherche les causes, veut les expliquer et agir sur elles; elle veut, en un mot, dominer le bien et le mal, faire naître l'un et le développer, lutter avec l'autre pour l'extirper et le détruire.'"<sup>29</sup>

The province of the author, then, according to Zola, would be to seek out the causes of the social evils, to delve into the anatomy of social classes as well as of individuals in order to explain the

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* The importance of the *milieu* as a determining factor in the life of the individual is basic in Balzac, whose lineal descendant Zola liked to consider himself.

<sup>24</sup> *Nos Auteurs Dramatiques*, Nouvelle Edition, Paris, Bibliothèque-Charpentier, 1923, p. 108.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>26</sup> "La Fille au Théâtre," *loc. cit.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Le Roman Expérimental*, ed. Maurice Le Blond, Paris, 1927, p. 105.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

existing abnormalities that are produced in society and man, while it would be within the realm of the legislators, since, presumably, they have profited from the documentation, "à faire naître le bien et à le développer, à lutter avec le mal, pour l'extirper et le détruire."<sup>30</sup> To the author, according to this line of reasoning, is delegated a motivation which contains a moral virtue, which is not to be found "dans les mots, mais dans les faits."<sup>31</sup>

In the particular case of the *filie*, then, it should be the task and end of the author to be able to say: "Voilà une vraie fille, voilà comment elle pousse et comment elle fonctionne ensuite, voilà des faits établis par l'observation et l'expérience; désormais, puisque l'expérience nous rend maîtres des faits, c'est à nous de les empêcher de se produire: assainissons les faubourgs, supprimons scientifiquement les filles."<sup>32</sup>

Almost like a religious refrain, Zola repeats over and over again the *morale* of *Truth*. In general terms, he asks that a dramatic work "ait la haute moralité du vrai, soit la leçon terrible d'une enquête sincère" and that the dramatist go to the very source of science—to the study of nature and to the anatomy of man—"dans un procès-verbal exact, d'autant plus original et puissant, que personne encore n'a osé le risquer sur les planches."<sup>33</sup>

In presenting the *filie* on the stage, Zola would similarly have the dramatists extend the analysis "à toutes les causes physiques et sociales" that have predetermined her and also show the double influence "sur les faits et des faits sur les personnages."<sup>34</sup>

The serious purposefulness of having a play bring out the social and human phenomena as examples of a deterministic philosophy in each individual indicates as well that Zola does not see in the

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Documents Littéraires*, ed. Maurice Le Blond, Paris, 1927, p. 311.

<sup>33</sup> *Le Roman Experimental*, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122. Speaking of the way in which a naturalist ought to treat the subject of *la fille* in the novel, Zola expresses essentially the same thought: "Il la montrera déterminée par l'hérédité et par le milieu; si elle glisse à la débauche, c'est qu'elle y a été poussée par l'ivrognerie des parents et par les promiscuités des faubourgs. Puis, l'auteur, en la suivant pas à pas, en l'analysant dans ses vêtements, dans sa demeure, dans les hommes qui l'approchent, montrera son rôle social, établira nettement de quelle façon elle désorganise et détruit." Only then, adds Zola, could the author say "Voilà une vraie fille, . . . voilà des faits établis par l'observation et l'expérience." (*Documents Littéraires*, *op. cit.*, p. 311.)

depiction of *la fille* either a sensational feast for the eyes or a provocation of morbid, illicit love desires; as such, gayety or light-heartedness are not expected to be found in such a play. Referring to *Nana*, the novel, and to the public's indignation at seeing "les filles graves," Zola in disgust alludes to those chroniclers and dramatists who mingle "dans le monde des actrices et des filles," and who protest "en souriant que ma Nana n'existait point." To them, says Zola, "cette débauche était plus gaie, plus spirituelle, moins enfoncée dans le drame de la chair."<sup>35</sup> Indeed, Zola's high intentions cannot be doubted, and this is why he seems particularly concerned with the problem of *la fille*. As a matter of fact, Zola shows public concern over this question: "On s'est beaucoup occupé des filles, dans ces derniers temps. J'ai moi-même fait un article, et à ce propos on m'a écrit un grand nombre de lettres."<sup>36</sup> Therefore, *la fille* to Zola is not to be treated as an abstract question but as a living reality—an unfortunate commentary on society. Not only does Zola lay the blame for the career of *la fille* on both her *milieu* and her heredity, but, when referring to the conditions of the working class whence springs the venal woman, he says: "Ce serait toute la condition sociale d'une classe à refaire."<sup>37</sup>

That is why it is especially important, says Zola, to treat the subject of *la fille* realistically, honestly, on the stage, not necessarily by transporting to the stage certain impossible scenes but rather by giving the facts, by showing the individual as the product of her heredity and environment which, from the dramatic point of view, would obviate the use of declamation, long tirades, "des grands mots et des grands sentiments."<sup>38</sup> This is especially significant for the theater, "fatalement la dernière forteresse de la convention."<sup>39</sup>

With this approach to the subject of *la fille* as well as to all sordid themes, Zola definitely implies that it is not the fault of the dramatist if such situations do exist; it is society's. The dramatist's

<sup>35</sup> *Documents Littéraires*, op. cit., p. 305.

<sup>36</sup> *Une Campagne*, op. cit., p. 157.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>38</sup> *Le Roman Expérimental*, op. cit., p. 116.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

task, as Zola views it, is to image life as he sees it. Thus, it can be seen that Zola, in his extremely realistic objectives, had a chaste, moral motivation which, in his concept of the courtesan, exemplifies a Naturalistic credo.

SIDNEY D. BRAUN

Yeshiva University,  
New York, N. Y.

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ROLAND v 337

It has been clear for some time that the celebrated poem is not the work of a primitive collectivity, at least in its extant redactions. On every hand are evidences of clerical learning, classical reminiscences, biblical influences and even liturgy. The present passage involves, not an accepted ecclesiastical rite, but an act of court protocol rendered comprehensible in the light of liturgical procedure.

Specifically it is a question of the meaning we can attach to *cungied* in the verse indicated. The glossary of Jenkins' edition contents itself with the translation 'leave, leave taking'; that of Bédier dismisses the matter even more summarily with 'congé.' The connotations are a good deal richer. An attempt is here made to specify what these are.

This is the situation: Ganelon has been chosen ambassador to the court of Marsile. Angered at the peers of Charlemagne, notably those close to Roland, he launches his defiance at them and announces vengeance, whereat, in haste to carry out his diabolical project, he asks of the emperor: "Dunez mei le cungied." Charles replies with the words "Al Jhesu e al mien," accompanying them with the sign of the cross. The text phrases his gesture: "De sa main destre l'ad asols e seignet."

Jenkins comments, in two footnotes, firstly, that etiquette in the middle ages was rigorous, the *congé*, requested by the subordinate and granted by the superior being a necessary part of any formal leave-taking. A second note adds that, since the superior is in this case a "priest-king," the manner of dismissing the ambassador could take on ecclesiastical features.

One may demur on two counts: 1) Does Charles make this gesture because he is of priestly character or is this priestly char-

acter attributed to him by the modern reader because he makes a gesture resembling an ecclesiastical rite? It is to be noted that elsewhere, i. e. v. 2177 of the same poem, where the *congé* is given *in extremis*, the function is logically taken over by Archbishop Turpin. This leads to the second question: 2) Is this an ordinary leave-taking from a royal court or is not the situation a special one? It may well be that protocol was a part of mediaeval life in the upper reaches of society; it will be the more specialized if the circumstances call for additional solemnity. This is the primary factor, that we have here a solemn mission to the Saracen, one designed to end a seven years' war waged in defense of the faith. The farewell is thus of extraordinary nature and should be so considered. From what we know of the times and of the portrait which the *chanson* affords us of the emperor, the religious elements will be prominent on such an occasion. It is therefore natural that these should be given due consideration, all the more so that, as will be seen, the two points of view, religious and lay, were difficult indeed to keep apart in that period.

Specifically, formal types of leave-taking are found largely in the monastic life, particularly where missions or errands of some moment are concerned. I know of such customs in the Marianist Order and among the Dominicans.<sup>1</sup> The most elaborate ceremonial I have located which is available in print<sup>2</sup> and which has the most bearing on the problem is the type known as *Itinerarium*, specifically here entitled *Benedictio Fratrum Missionarium ad Missiones Exteras Profiscentium*, the footnote to which significantly reads: *De Benedictione et Impositione Crucis Profiscentibus in Subsidium et Defensionem Fidei Christianae*. The order of the rite is as follows: Firstly it is emphasized that the Abbot may set the hour as he desires, but the place should be a church or chapel. To that location the procession, arranged according to a definite plan, directs itself. The Abbot recites the antiphon "Veni, Sancte Spiritus"; after the responses, there is a prayer in which appears the following: "emitte lucem tuam in hos servos tuos (hunc

<sup>1</sup> My informants here are, respectively, Fr. E. J. Weber, S. M., Dayton, O., and Sister M. Amelia, O. P., St. Mary's of the Springs, Columbus, O.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the *Ritualet Monasticum*, Typis Abbatiae Sanctis Joannis Baptistae, Collegeville, Minn., p. 756. I owe the reference to Rev. E. D. MacCormack, O. S. B., St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe Pa.

servum tuum), qua inflammati (inflammatus), gentes tenebris obcaecatos illuminet et ad lumen indeficiens perducant (perducat).” After the sermon, the brothers who are setting forth come into the sanctuary and kneel before the altar, the choir singing various hymns, among which, again significantly, the *Praedium Certaminis*. The crosses carried by the missionaries are blessed, this portion being terminated by a prayer in which appears this sentence: “. . . et contra omnes diabolicas fraudes virtutem eis (ei) tuas defensiones impendas . . .” In the *Oratio et Benedictio Finalis* we find the prayer beginning: “Protector noster, aspice, Deus; et propugnatores tuos (propugnatorum [*sic*] tuum) a paganorum defende periculis,” the whole concluding with a benediction very much like that indicated for other orders.

Certain similarities to the errand of Ganelon may be pointed out: 1) There is a “missio” (e.g. to the Saracen) in which perforce a religious element is present. 2) Notwithstanding, the religious character is different from other ceremonies, in the *Itinerarium*, in that no rigid observance, either of time of the day or of the year is insisted on, simply that an appropriate place be set. This is primarily a farewell and a benediction. Such is the essential nature, *mutatis mutandis*, of the leave-taking of Ganelon. 3) In both cases, a battle in defense of the faith is the central theme. 4) This battle is fraught with difficulties, and the fear of diabolic machinations calculated to defeat the purpose of the mission is never absent; compare the prayer of the *Itinerarium* and the gloomy forecasts of the *Roland*.

What shall we say, now, concerning the use of *asols*? The *Itinerarium* says nothing of absolution. The *Roland* ceremony is exceedingly sketchy from any liturgical point of view. No “absolvo te” is uttered, and that is not surprising in the presence of the Archbishop of Rheims, who might conceivably have found such a usurpation of his functions little to his liking. The editors of the *Chanson* have chosen to take the word literally. Bédier translates ‘il l’a absous’; Bertoni, ‘l’ha assolto e benedetto’; so, too, Gautier and Jenkins, the latter in the vocabulary. It would seem, likewise, that the conjunction with *seigniet* confirms the judgment of these editors.<sup>3</sup> Yet even this testimony is inconclusive. *Asols* is

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Rol.* v. 2957: *Sis unt asols e seigniez de part Deu*, referring to abbots and bishops. A similar juxtaposition involves a chaplain in an



capable of freer interpretation. So short a dictionary as Godefroy-Salmon-Bonnard records meanings as diverse as 'affranchir, délivrer, décharger, tenir quitte.' Du Cange (*Glossarium*) speaks of an "absolutionem discedendi" rendered 'licentiam, facultatem discedendi.' He attracts our attention to a message in Theophanes Confessor's *Chronographia*, where ἀπελνύσαμεν and its variant ἀποστείλαμεν are rendered by *absolvimus* in the Latin version of Anastasius Bibliothecarius, as follows: Hunc nos baptizantes ad propriam *absolvimus* regionem.<sup>4</sup> Now ἀπολύω is rendered in classical Greek 'to set free, release, acquit, discharge' (Liddell and Scott). A variant is ἀποστέλλω which, remarks the editor, in his index, "haud raro in codd. confunditur" and which must be interpreted 'to send away, despatch,' i. e. on mission. Classic Latin *absolvo* can mean 'to set free, dismiss, release, acquit' (Harper). Therefore it is not surprising to see Theophanes (p. 324, l. 24) write: καὶ τούτους ὅπλίσας πάντας ἀπέλυσεν ἐνωθῆναι τῷ στρατῷ τοῦ 'Ραζάτου, . . . which is translated by Anast. (II, p. 202, ll. 25-6): et hos armatos cunctos *direxit* exercitui uniendos Rhazati . . . ; or (313, 4): ἔλην στρατιωτῶν ἀπέλυσε φυλάττειν πρὸς αὐτὸν . . . translated: alam militum ad custodiendas *misit* clausuras. Thus Charles merely accompanies his "dismissal" with a blessing, but without necessarily administering absolution, as indeed occurs in the Itinerarium.

The expression "Al Jhesu e al mien," accompanying the act, seems, coming as it does from a layman, a trifle strong. Turpin makes no objection, however, and the public is apparently not shocked. The answer doubtless lies in the mediaeval conception of Regnum and Sacerdotium, the dual hierarchy founded on authority derived from God, hence sacred in both branches.<sup>5</sup> That the line of demarcation was indistinct is to be taken for granted, as suggested above. Paulinus of Aquileia expresses, with reference to Charlemagne himself, the following wish: Sit dominus et pater,

example from *Le livre des miracles de N. D. de Chartres*, v. 1855 (Tobler-Lommatzsch).

<sup>4</sup> *Theophanis Chronographia* recensuit Carolus de Boor, Lipsiae (Teubner, 1883). The index is such that I cannot locate the passage but there are other parallels that meet the specifications; cf. below. Vol. II contains Anastasius' *Chronographia Tripartita*.

<sup>5</sup> K. Heisig, *Geschichtsmetaphysik d. Rolandsliedes*, in *ZRPh.*, LV (1935), 71-88.

sit rex et sacerdos! A word of caution is in order, before we place an interpretation on this passage, as shown by the following citations: Melchidesek noster rex atque sacerdos (reference being to Childebert 1), or: Hac unctione tante religionis gratiam sortitur, ut exempla Aaron in Dei servitio debeat imitari.<sup>6</sup> It is clear that we are confronted by the Old Testament theocratic ideal carried over to a "propugnator" of the Church Militant, to whom, in consequence, visions are attributed and even the gift of prayer so efficacious as to stop the sun, as did Joshua. To bring into consideration, on the other hand, the fact that the emperor hears Mass with regularity or gives his blessing to the troops is entirely beside the point.<sup>7</sup> From all these attributes to such a priestly function as the administration of the sacrament of Absolution in the presence of the Archbishop of Rheims the distance is considerable! Even the chronicler of Chlotar I spoke of the leader of the Franks as "quasi-sacerdos" and no more (Heisig, p. 71). Thus the appellation of Heisig "Priester-König" must not be taken literally. The fact remains that, in the mind of the cleric who wrote the *Roland*, enough of the ancient priest-king idea could have carried over for him to imagine at the court of the Franks a ceremonial vaguely suggestive of an itinerarium in that it is a farewell before a mission, or for that same poet to imagine a gesture of dismissal which the vagueness of *asoldre* allows him to designate by that term.

To conclude:

1. There is no question of "etiquette" in the general sense that Jenkins would attribute to the term, in his edition. The connotation is specific.

2. As corollary to 1, it is to be noted that Ganelon asks, not for a *congé* but for the *congé*, thus referring to a ceremony the character of which was clear to him and to those about him.

3. Since this is a "missio," the leave-taking is comparable, though in the nature of the case not identical, with a monastic Itinerarium.

4. As corollary to 3, it is to be noted that this is a lesser rite

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

<sup>7</sup> The Brazilian slave owner gave his "benção" to his dependents and likewise exercised a kind of patriarchal surveillance over religious practices. Heisig is here quite confused.

liturgically, but, in so far as it approaches the religious, it is a ceremony of great solemnity from the lay viewpoint.

5. Royalty, endowed even to-day with certain charismatic powers, may take over a ceremony of this kind, with adaptations dictated by the circumstances. This is especially true of Charlemagne, comparable as he was to the Priest King of the Old Testament in the eyes of contemporaries and successors. The word *asols* does not have to indicate Absolution, however, and it is not within his power to administer the sacrament. It is a question here of a dismissal ceremony with the appropriate paternal blessing.

Clearly the more a lay ceremonial approaches the religious rite, the situation in this poem becomes more dramatic. In such a moment of grave responsibility, feudal quarrels, which are at the same time family quarrels in the *maisniée*, strike a particularly jarring note. We know that Ganelon is no fool. Psychologically he is about as complex a being as we are likely to find in the OF epic. Too sensitive not to realize that his personal hatreds border on the blasphemous, he is unnerved in this charged atmosphere, and so, as he is about to accept the glove, it falls from his hands, to the dismay of the Franks. If such an interpretation be accepted, this moment of farewell is a moment of rare poignancy.

A. H. SCHUTZ<sup>8</sup>

Ohio State University

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#### RACINE AVAIT-IL LU ENNIUS?

Dès le début de sa première préface d'*Andromaque*, Racine déclare nettement que "tout le sujet de cette tragédie" vient de quelques vers du troisième livre de l'*Enéide*. Dans cette même préface, il mentionne encore les *Troyennes* de Sénèque et le deuxième livre de l'*Enéide*, dont le récit notamment de la prise du palais de Priam lui avait visiblement servi de palette pour tracer la fresque prestigieuse de la "nuit éternelle" de Troie dont les tableaux successifs colorent la toile de fond de sa tragédie. Quelques-unes de ses

<sup>8</sup> Besides those mentioned previously, I have a real debt to Professor H. Hatzfeld, Catholic University of America, and to Dom Anselm Strittmatter, O. S. B., St. Anselm's Priory, Washington, D. C., for many suggestions.

images, d'autre part, lui sont venues directement d'Homère et de l'Euripide des *Troyennes*, d'*Hécube* et naturellement d'*Andromaque* dont il dit quelques mots dans sa préface. A cela il semble qu'il faille ajouter plusieurs vers de l'*Andromaque captive* d'Ennius, tragédie aujourd'hui perdue dont Cicéron cite quelques rares fragments dans ses *Tusculanes*.

La plupart des tragédies d'Ennius, — *Achille*, *Alexandre*, *la Rançon d'Hector*, *Hécube*, etc., — traitaient de sujets homériques empruntés à Euripide. *Andromaque captive* ne fait pas exception et Ennius certes y devait beaucoup au dramaturge athénien. Voici les vers de cette tragédie que Cicéron nous rapporte :

Ex opibus summis opis egens, Hector, tuae . . .  
 Quid petam praesidi aut exequar? quoue nunc  
 Auxilio exili aut fugae freta sim?  
 Arce et urbe orba sum. Quo accidam? quo applicem?  
 Cui nec arae patriae domi stant, fractae et disiectae iacent,  
 Fana flamma deflagrata, tosti alti stant parietes  
 Deformati atque abiecte crispa . . .  
 O pater, o patria, o Priami domus,  
 Saepum altisono cardine templum!  
 Vidi ego te adstante ope barbarica  
 Tectis caelatis, laqueatis,  
 Auro, ebore instructam regifice . . .<sup>1</sup>  
 Haec omnia uidi inflammari,  
 Priamo ui uitam euitari,  
 Iouis aram sanguine turpari . . .<sup>2</sup>  
 Vidi, uidere quod me passa aegerrume,  
 Hectorem curru quadriugo raptarier . . .<sup>3</sup>

Quelques détails, tels ceux sur la splendeur orientale du palais troyen, semblent être du cru du poète latin et Virgile ne les oubliera pas quand il combinera la double imitation d'Euripide et d'Ennius :

Quinquaginta illi thalami, spes tanta nepotum,  
 Barbarico postes auro spoliisque superbi  
 Procubuerunt.<sup>4</sup>

Les vers de Racine qui, pensons-nous, doivent être rapprochés de ceux d'Ennius, sont bien connus :

<sup>1</sup> *Tusculanes*, III, xix, 44. Deux des ces vers se trouvent également cités *ibid.*, I, xxxv, 85.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, III, xix, 45. Ces vers se trouvent également cités *ibid.*, I, xxv, 85; et le premier *ibid.*, III, xxii, 53.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, I, xlv, 105.

<sup>4</sup> *Enéide*, II, 503-505.

Allons sur son tombeau consulter mon époux.

(III, viii, 1048)

Je ne vois que des tours que la cendre a couvertes.

(I, ii, 201)

Non vous n'espérez plus de nous revoir encor,  
Sacrés murs, que n'a pu conserver mon Hector!

(I, iv, 335-336)

O cendres d'un époux! ô Troyens! ô mon père!

(III, viii, 1045)

J'ai vu mon père mort et nos murs embrasés;  
J'ai vu trancher les jours de ma famille entière,  
Et mon époux sanglant traîné sur la poussière.

(III, vi, 929-930)

Dois-je oublier Hector privé de funérailles,  
Et traîné sans honneur autour de nos murailles?  
Dois-je oublier son père à mes pieds renversé,  
Ensanglantant l'autel qu'il tenait embrassé?

(III, viii, 993-996)

Il ne s'agit là sans doute que de poncifs qui se trouvaient un peu partout. Le tableau de Priam égorgé au pied de l'autel est un lieu commun des poètes aussi bien que des céramistes. Il vient, non pas d'Homère car Priam vit encore au dernier vers de l'*Iliade*, mais des tragiques grecs. L'Andromaque d'Euripide soupirait déjà:

καὶ τὸν φυτουργὸν Πρίαμον οὐκ ἄλλων πάρα  
κλύουσ' ἔκλαυσα, τοῖσδε δ' εἶδον ὄμμασιν  
αὐτὴ κατασφαγέντ' ἐφ' ἑρκέω πυρᾶ.<sup>5</sup>

Depuis Euripide, chacun avait repris ce tableau, Virgile:

Vidi Hecubam centumque nurus Priamumque per aras  
Sanguine foedantem quos ipse sacrauerat ignes.<sup>6</sup>

Ovide:

Exiguumque senis Priami Iouis ara cruorem  
Combiberat.<sup>7</sup>

Sénèque:

<sup>5</sup> *Troyennes*, 481-483: "Et Priam, l'ancêtre, ce n'est pas sur le rapport d'un autre que je l'ai pleuré; mais, de mes propres yeux, je l'ai vu massacré près du feu de l'autel domestique." Cf. également: "Sur les marches de l'autel de Zeus domestique, Priam est tombé mort" (*ibid.*, 16-17); et le passage suivant: "Priam lui-même, auprès de l'autel bâti par le dieu, tomba massacré par le fils meurtrier d'Achille" (*Hécube*, 23-24).

<sup>6</sup> *Enéide*, II, 501-502.

<sup>7</sup> *Métamorphoses*, XII, 409-410.

Vidi execrandum regiae caedis nefas  
 Ipsasque ad aras maius admissum scelus  
 Aeacidis armis, cum ferox, scaeva manu  
 Coma reflectens regium torta caput,  
 Alto nefandum uulneri ferrum abdidit;  
 Quod penitus actum cum recepisset libens,  
 Ensis senili siccus e iugulo redit.<sup>8</sup>

et d'autres encore. Evidemment, le tableau de Virgile vient partiellement d'Ennius, et celui d'Ennius partiellement d'Euripide. Celui d'Ovide est déjà une sorte de jeu d'esprit plus alexandrin, et celui de Sénèque, dans son réalisme anatomique, est d'une brutalité que, dans sa préface, Racine déclare lui-même excessive. Quant au récit de Virgile, il le connaissait fort bien et il ne l'oubliera pas lorsqu'il écrira *Phèdre* et qu' Aricie pleurant

Six frères . . . Quel espoir d'une illustre maison,

(II, I, 424)

fera écho au *spes tanta nepotum* de l'*Enéide*. Mais Racine connaissait fort bien aussi les *Tusculanes* et, en 1662, il y avait renvoyé à trois reprises dans ses *Remarques sur les Olympiques de Pindare* et ses *Remarques sur l'Odyssée d'Homère*.

D'autre part, le désarroi d'Andromaque, *opis egens, Hector, tuae*, qui ne sait où se tourner, est évidemment le même exactement qui mène l'héroïne de Racine sur son tombeau consulter son époux. Enfin, le vers de Racine

O cendres d'un époux! ô Troyens! ô mon père,

est bien, dans son mouvement, l'écho du vers d'Ennius

O pater, o patria, o Priami domus.

Il est impossible de douter que Racine ait connu ces vers d'Ennius qui arrachaient déjà à Cicéron ce commentaire admiratif qui rencontra sans doute l'assentiment de Racine: "O poetam egregium! . . . Praeclarum carmen! Est enim et rebus et uerbis et modis lugubre."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Troyennes*, 44-50. Racine se souvint des vers d'Ovide et de Sénèque quand il mit dans la bouche d'Hermione les vers suivants, reprochant ses crimes à Pyrrhus:

Tandis que dans son sein votre bras enfoncé  
 Cherche un reste de sang que l'âge avait glacé.

(IV, V, 1335-1336)

<sup>9</sup> *Tusculanes*, III, xix, 44-45.



Mais ce qui nous paraît surtout intéressant dans ce rapprochement, c'est d'ajouter un nouvel élément au faisceau poétique qui, depuis l'antiquité, convergeait sur la vaste mémoire de Racine; c'est d'illustrer par un nouvel exemple le procédé inconscient de création poétique caractéristique de Racine. Dans son esprit, le sac de Troie était un tableau composite où se confondaient les apports de plusieurs poètes grecs et latins. C'est ainsi, par exemple, que le *j'ai vu* de la tragédie française, s'il est bien à la fois l'*είδον* d'Euripide et le *vidi* d'Ennius, de Virgile et de Sénèque, est avant tout celui de Racine lui-même qui, à travers la lentille magique des poètes antiques, *voyait* réellement la scène tragique, condition nécessaire pour nous la faire voir. Les vers de Racine sont, pourrait-on dire, la "résultante" de tous ceux que l'antiquité avait déposés en lui. La personnalité poétique de Racine se manifeste ici par un triple procédé de décantation, de réfraction et de recréation; de décantation en tant qu'il élimine spontanément tel élément de Sénèque trop brutal, trop choquant; de réfraction en ce que, par exemple, la flamme sacrée qui brûle dans les tableaux d'Euripide et de Virgile n'existe plus chez Racine, comme, du reste, chez Ennius; de recréation enfin en ce que nul travail de "fiches" sur les différents textes que nous avons cités n'aurait jamais fait surgir les alexandrins d'*Andromaque*. De même encore, les personnages de sa tragédie, Racine le déclare lui-même dans une phrase significative de sa première préface, "sont si fameux dans l'antiquité que, pour peu qu'on la connaisse, on verra bien que je les ai rendus tels que les anciens poètes nous les ont donnés." Et c'est finalement grâce à l'anonymat qu'expriment ces mots que les personnages d'*Andromaque* peuvent réaliser le paradoxe d'être à la fois ceux d'Homère, d'Euripide, d'Ennius, de Virgile, de Sénèque, et de demeurer aussi et surtout ceux de Racine.

GEORGES MAY

Yale University

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#### THE BEGINNING OF VOLTAIRE'S *POÈME SUR LE DÉSASTRE DE LISBONNE*

In the standard Moland edition of Voltaire's *Œuvres complètes*, the first two lines of his vigorous *Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne* (1756) read as follows:

O malheureux mortels! ô terre déplorable!  
O de tous les mortels assemblage effroyable!<sup>1</sup>

The same text is found also in the preceding Beuchot edition<sup>2</sup> on which Moland is to a considerable degree based.

Why this surprising repetition of "mortels" in two successive lines? Emphasis can hardly be the reason since, on reflection, we find the meaning of "this frightful assemblage of all mortals" much less clear and much less precise than at first sight might be thought. It is certainly unlikely that Voltaire, the apostle of clarity, would have repeated this key word except deliberately and with full knowledge of exactly what he meant. Moreover, during the full three months of heated discussion and careful revision which transpired from the beginning of December, 1755, the date of the earliest draft,<sup>3</sup> to the publication of the first wholly authorized edition in March of 1756,<sup>4</sup> the author had ample time to weigh thoughtfully each word of this short, but important poem of only two hundred thirty-four lines. The beginning would naturally attract his very particular attention. What, then, is the explanation of this anomalous reading?

The answer is provided by a letter of Voltaire's secretary, Colini, to Dupont under date of March 20, 1756. In this letter, the writer quotes the first lines of the poem as follows:

O malheureux mortels! ô terre déplorable!  
O de tous les fléaux assemblage effroyable!<sup>5</sup>

With this substitution of the expressive "fléaux" for the repetitious use of "mortels," the meaning becomes at once crystal-clear. Here is "le mot juste," the word which from the very beginning introduces the central idea of "scourges," of *disaster*, as indicated by the title, the word which Voltaire actually wrote.

<sup>1</sup> Voltaire, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Louis Moland, Paris, Garnier, 1877-85, 52 vols., IX (1877), 470.

<sup>2</sup> Voltaire, *Œuvres*, ed. by Beuchot, Paris, 1828-40, 72 vols., XII (1833), 191. For this information on the Beuchot reading, I am indebted to the kindness of Dr. Otis Fellows of Columbia University.

<sup>3</sup> Voltaire, Letter to Gabriel Cramer of Dec. 4, 1755, pub. in *RR*, XXXI (1940), 342-43, and n. 9. Cf. *MLN*, LVI (1941), 423, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Georges Ascoli, Voltaire, *Poèmes philosophiques*, mimeographed edition, Paris, Centre de documentation universitaire [1935?], p. 186.

<sup>5</sup> Moland, XXXIX, 10.

The accuracy of Colini's testimony is confirmed by Georges Ascoli, citing the early texts of late 1755 and the winter of 1756. Indeed, Voltaire in the first draft wrote "malheurs," to which in the end he preferred the stronger "fléaux," but with no essential change of meaning.<sup>6</sup> Ascoli did not, however, point out the significant Beuchot and Moland errors, which have naturally tended to be repeated in most later reprintings of the poem.<sup>7</sup>

When we turn now to Kehl, that final synthesis of eighteenth-century editions of Voltaire, we also find the reading "fléaux,"<sup>8</sup> thus confirming the evidence of Colini and Ascoli.

Evidently, a copyist or printer working for Beuchot inadvertently repeated "mortels," an error all the more natural since the second occurrence of the word falls directly under the first. Moland, following Beuchot instead of Kehl, continued the faulty reading. Because the passage, in spite of everything against it, did seem to make a kind of sense, the mistake easily went unnoticed and has persisted.

One of the first and most essential problems of literary study is to provide a text which accurately reproduces the author's thought. The above example offers a small, but significant case in point. Until the true reading is restored, the very beginning of Voltaire's poem appears careless in style and hazy in meaning. No sound interpretation is possible until we are sure of our text.

The passage in Beuchot and Moland should therefore be corrected in subsequent printings and studies to coincide with the thoroughly satisfactory eighteenth-century versions:

O malheureux mortels! ô terre déplorable!  
O de tous les fléaux assemblage effroyable!

GEORGE R. HAVENS

Ohio State University

<sup>6</sup> Georges Ascoli, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

<sup>7</sup> But not in the *Œuvres choisies de Voltaire*, ed. by Georges Bengesco, 10 vols., Paris, 1877-92, VI (*Poésies*, 1889), p. 136. Bengesco followed, not Kehl, but the text of the edition of 1775, "dite encadrée," published during the lifetime and under the direction of Voltaire (cf. *ibid.*, I, p. 5). For this information, I am again indebted to Dr. Otis Fellows, as also for the fact that the correct reading appears likewise in the *Œuvres complètes*, Paris, Armand-Aubrée, XI (1829), 107.

<sup>8</sup> Voltaire, *Œuvres complètes*, De l'Imprimerie de la Société littéraire-typographique [Kehl], XII (1784 and 1785), 117.

## THE IDENTITY OF PONTUS DE TYARD'S "CURIEUX"

In the *Discours philosophiques*<sup>1</sup> of Pontus de Tyard, dialogues in which the poet turned philosopher treats a myriad of subjects with uncommon breadth of spirit and originality, perhaps the most important speaker is "Le Curieux," who appears as a bold advocate of reason and the experimental method, faced with opponents who uphold traditional beliefs and systems of thought. Le Curieux takes part in four of the discourses: the *Solitaire Second*, the *Premier Curieux* and *Second Curieux*, and *Mantice*.<sup>2</sup> In the first, where Pontus, as the "Solitaire," discusses music with his lady, "Pasithée," Le Curieux joins in the conversation, expressing great admiration for the learning of Pontus; in the other three, pitted against the theologian Hieromnime,<sup>3</sup> and Mantice the astrologer,<sup>4</sup> he is shown attacking the opinions of his conservative adversaries with telling effect and vigor. It is apparent, moreover, that on all important points, Le Curieux and Pontus de Tyard are in agreement.<sup>5</sup>

The dialogues, according to the author, represent actual discussions which he claims to have reproduced from memory, relating as closely as possible the arguments and opinions of each debater.<sup>6</sup> Each is given a pseudonym; of Le Curieux, Pontus says merely: "De ce nom je veux masquer un gentilhomme, mien parent, diligent amateur de toutes disciplines."<sup>7</sup>

The phrase "mien parent" suggests that Le Curieux was the

<sup>1</sup> Paris, Langelier, 1587.

<sup>2</sup> First editions of these works, published by Jean de Tournes at Lyons, appeared in 1552, 1557, and 1558 respectively.

<sup>3</sup> "... homme remply de pieté, & diligent observateur de la religion," *Discours philosophiques*, f. 338 r°.

<sup>4</sup> "Amy mien excellent en ceste profession, le nom duquel je cele sous cetui," *Mantice, ou Discours de la Verité de divination par astrologie*, Lyon, Jean de Tournes, 1558, p. 5. I cannot agree with R. J. Clements' suggestion that "Mantice" is Mellin de Saint-Gelays (cf. *Critical Theory and Practice of the Pléiade*, Harvard University Press, 1942, pp. 221-222). But Professor Clements promises an article on the subject.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. my article, "Pontus de Tyard and the Science of His Age," *RR*, xxxviii, 17.

<sup>6</sup> *Mantice*, Lyon, 1558, pp. 6-7.

<sup>7</sup> *Discours philosophiques*, f. 97 v°.

poet, Guillaume des Autels, who was a frequent visitor to the castle of Bissy, and a relative as well as a protégé of Pontus de Tyard.<sup>8</sup> Des Autels was the son of Fiacre Des Autels, seigneur of Vernoble, and Anne de la Vesvre; his maternal grandmother was Anne de Tyard, wife of Jacques de la Vesvre. In an ode addressed to Pontus, Des Autels speaks of their relationship and communion of interests:

Nostre grand similitude  
D'affection & d'estude,  
Et ton superbe Bissy  
Approche si pres d'ici,  
Qu'il peut voir la reverance  
Qui lui fait ma demeurance,  
Et denature la loi  
Qui d'une mesme semente  
A produit & toi & moi.

He then refers to "Estienne ton aieul pere/ D'Anne mere de ma mere."<sup>9</sup> Pontus, in turn, writes warmly of "mon jeune Des Autels,"<sup>10</sup> defending him against his critics.<sup>11</sup>

Further indication that Des Autels is *Le Curieux* may be found in the long liminary poem he wrote for the first edition of *Mantice*.<sup>12</sup> Here he summarizes the prose works of Pontus, declaring them as great as "ceux dont la Grece savante/ s'esmerveille, & de ceux

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Gaspard Pontus de Thiard: *Histoire de Pontus de Thyard de Bissy, suivie de la genealogie de cette maison, et de la relation de la campagne de 1664 en Hongrie*, Neuchatel, 1784, pp. 9-11: "Il recevoit dans ce chateau (Bissy) les visites des savans & des Poëtes qui vivoient alors en Bourgogne. Celui de tous qu'il aimoit le mieux, étoit un jeune gentilhomme son parent, appelé Guillaume Desautels, seigneur de Vernoble."

<sup>9</sup> Cited *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Œuvres poétiques de Pontus de Tyard*, ed. Marty-Laveaux, Paris, Lemerre, 1875, p. 125.

<sup>11</sup>

. . . Desautelz,

Qui ha en ses premiers ans  
Fait preuve tant honorée  
De sa plume enamorée:  
Et qui le tort ha remiz  
Au front de ses ennemis . . .

*Ibid.* Cf. also pp. 67, 112 and 140.

<sup>12</sup> Pp. vi-ix. The same poem appears in Latin and French versions. Chamard (*Histoire de la Pléiade*, III, 152, n. 3) calls these "deux poèmes de Guillaume des Autels, l'un en latin, l'autre en français."

desquelz Romme se vante." In the last half of the poem, he praises Pontus for dealing such an effective blow at astrology:

Or toy le plus savant de tous les Socratiques,  
Le grave & bon conseil d'Eudoxe tu pratiques:  
Delivrant d'esperance, & de peur noz esprits,  
Et de tout ce de sot, que nous avons appris,  
Du Chaldaïque abus . . .

In conclusion, he writes:

Voire qu'en tes escrits moymesme je pren vie:  
Ce qu'aussi hautement scet bien dire l'envie,  
Qui se plaint que ton nom fait mon nom, & ainsi  
Je le dy, toutefois j'ay quelque esprit aussi.  
Que hardiment ma France un jour d'avoir s'assure  
Honneur par mon estude, & qu'avec grande usure  
Je rendray au Lycee orné de livres bons,  
Et à l'Academie ombrageuse, leurs dons.

Here Des Autels alludes to the rôle he plays in the various prose works of Pontus, and while admitting that (as jealous folk allege) he owes his reputation to his appearance there,<sup>13</sup> promises a work of his own, which like his master's will be worthy of Plato.

In typical fashion, Des Autels provides a final clue in the last line of his sonnet concluding the *Solitaire Second* and addressed to his learned companions in conversation:

La vicieuse ignorance vulgaire,  
De la vertu l'ennemie dentée,  
Creve à ceste heure ardemment dépitée,  
Voyant si clair ton honneur, Solitaire:  
Mais toy, à qui rien mortel ne peut plaire,  
Belle, sçavante, & sage Pasithée  
Ry, en voyant la gloire au Ciel portée  
De ta vertu, plus que le Midy claire.  
O deux esprits nez de celeste race,  
Qu'à bon droit est ce siecle glorieux  
Qui s'enrichit des biens de vostre grace!  
Ne sçay comment ja desja furieux  
Vous me rendez, de suivre vostre trace  
(Mais pournéant hélas) trop curieux.<sup>14</sup>

Thus Guillaume des Autels, as "Le Curieux," followed Pontus

<sup>13</sup> It is reasonable to suppose that members of the circle of poets and scholars that frequented Bissy knew the real names of the various figures in the *Discours*.

<sup>14</sup> *Discours philosophiques*, f. 132 v°.



de Tyard in the study of philosophy, whereby, as he said, "à l'imitation des anciens, nous nettoions & polissons noz entendemens, & . . . en discourant par disputes & divers argumens, nous puisons la congnoissance certaine de la Nature des choses."<sup>15</sup>

J. C. LAPP

Oberlin College

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SOME SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE SECOND  
EDITION OF MANUEL GÁLVEZ'  
*MIÉRCOLES SANTO*

Strongly influenced by the naturalistic school of literature, Manuel Gálvez is nonetheless a good Catholic. With these two facts in mind, the student of his novelistic work is ever interested to discover to what extent the author's characters are either defeated by their heredity and environment or saved by some inner strength, freedom of will, or faith. Nowhere in Gálvez' writings is the conflict between the flesh and the spirit more dramatic than in the novel, *Miércoles Santo*.

Padre Eudósio Solanas is a great fat man who nearly suffocates in the close confinement of the confessional in the late-summer heat of a Holy Wednesday in Buenos Aires. The pure life of the spirit which he seeks to lead is made difficult by the needs of his overflowing humanity which cannot help but long now and then for the creature comforts and warm affection which a home and family of his own would have afforded him. Furthermore, despite the austerity of his life, his body will not let him forget altogether the lusts of the flesh. These he is in habit of extinguishing with blows from the disciplinary lash. Padre Eudósio had had but one experience with sexual temptation and the love of woman in his youth. This incident he had striven to forget but as he listened to the constant procession of sinners, he could not keep his mind free of the old experience. The reader is acutely aware that this man, as he counsels and absolves his visitors, is himself human and tempted like as they. Father Eudósio feels that on this terrible day of confessions the Devil is persecuting him with special efforts. He is sure of this when a man presents himself who is tempted by the same doubts as the Padre himself with regard to the virgin birth of Christ. While Eudósio meditates, the man disappears, which leads the good father to believe that he has been talking with Satan himself. Thinking that his physical and spiritual condition are certainly not of the

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<sup>15</sup> *Mantice*, Lyon, 1558, p. 7.

best, Eudósio resolves to consult first a doctor and then his own personal confessor.

Thus far the two editions of the novel are identical, but from this point on the edition of 1930<sup>1</sup> proceeds as follows:

Eudósio goes to see the doctor who finds nothing wrong with him, pats him on the back and sends him away. His confessor is a matter-of-fact Jesuit who is inclined to scout the personal appearance of the Devil to Eudósio. The obese curate then returns to his confessional to resume the struggle. As the day wears on, his body becomes more and more tired and his spirit more troubled. The climax is reached when the very woman who tempted him as a girl comes to make confession. Not recognizing the churchman, she speaks of her love for the young seminarist and of how his rejection of her had caused her to hate all priests. For a time she had been a Protestant. Now she wishes to confess and return to the fold. As the woman dwells on the details of their former experience, Eudósio strives to fight down the flood of lascivious thoughts induced by the woman's words. When she confesses that were she to meet the man again, she no doubt would try once more to win his love, Eudósio feels himself overcome by the Evil One. Praying desperately to the Virgin, he lurches out of the confessional. For a moment he thinks himself saved as he stands suddenly alone in the silent church. Then, there before him is the man of the morning, the man whom he suspected of being the Devil. As he watches, the figure of the man becomes tremendous. His bat wings reach the vaulted ceiling. Uttering a strangled cry, Eudósio slumps dead on the church floor.

It is odd that the author of *Nacha Regules* should make his novel end so abruptly and pessimistically. What was the physical cause of death, a mere mental conflict? Why is this Christian man allowed to fall into the clutches of Satan. This ending is neither good naturalism nor good Christianity and from either point of view it is forced and unsatisfying.

But the second edition,<sup>2</sup> instead of ending with these two lines:

De la garganta del Padre Solanas salió un grito hecho pedazos y su cuerpo se derrumbó.<sup>3</sup>

ends thus:

De la garganta del Padre Solanas salió, hecha pedazos, una invocación a María. El monstruo desapareció. La Virgen sonrió con dulzura al sacerdote. Pero al mismo tiempo, Solanas sintió como si toda su sangre afluyese a su cabeza. En una niebla de su inteligencia, recordó las recomendaciones del

<sup>1</sup> Manuel Gálvez: *Miércoles Santo*. Buenos Aires. Librería y Editorial "La Facultad" Juan Roldán y Cía. 1930.

<sup>2</sup> Manuel Gálvez: *Miércoles Santo*. Buenos Aires. Editorial Tor. 1942.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. "La Facultad," p. 199.

médico. Golpes violentos martillaban su cabeza, parecían hincharle las venas. Y de pronto, las piernas le faltaron y su cuerpo se derrumbó sin vida.<sup>4</sup>

One's first impression is that Gálvez has merely given us a happier and more Christian ending. Faith triumphs over the lusts of the flesh. But no, let us look back now at the Padre's interview with the doctor, which formerly ended thus:

Y rió clamorosamente, palmeando al sacerdote.

Solanas se dirigió a su iglesia. Allí se arrodilló y pidió al Señor que

...

But in the edition of 1942, note what the author has inserted:

Y rió clamorosamente, palmeando al sacerdote.

Antes de que Solanas terminase de vestirse, el médico quiso tomarle la tensión arterial. El sacerdote, que ignoraba lo que fuese aquello, vió perplejo subir y bajar la columnita de mercurio.

—¡Muy alta!

—Y eso, ¿qué significa?

Solanas advirtió una contrariedad en el rostro del médico.

—Significa, Padre, que usted debe meterse en cama en seguida, no comer durante unos días, tomar hoy mismo un buen purgante y, naturalmente, no hacer ningún esfuerzo físico ni intelectual. Y llame cuanto antes a un clínico. Créame, Padre, que la cosa es seria.

El sacerdote se despidió, pensando en que hasta después de la Semana Santa no podría ocuparse de su salud. Ni tenía derecho para hacerlo, ni, por otra parte, creía estar enfermo de otra cosa que de los nervios, aunque en este punto el especialista acababa de tranquilizarle. Dios lo necesitaba. En fin, si sentía algunas molestias físicas, él las atribuya a su obesidad.

Solanas se dirigió a su iglesia. Allí, sin acordarse de las recomendaciones del médico, se arrodilló y pidió al Señor que . . .<sup>5</sup>

Thus, there is now a good physical reason for the death of Father Solanas. By the addition of a few skilful paragraphs Manuel Gálvez has accomplished the paradox of making his novel at once more naturalistic and more Christian—more naturalistic in that high blood pressure now explains both his physical distress and his sudden death, more Christian in that we are assured of God's mercy for His would-be loyal follower, Padre Eudasio Solanas.

DONALD F. BROWN

*The Johns Hopkins University*

<sup>4</sup> Ed. Tor, p. 190.

<sup>5</sup> Ed. "La Facultad," p. 118.

<sup>6</sup> Ed. Tor, p. 114.

## ÉTÉ 1532

On va répétant que l'été 1532 fut exceptionnellement chaud.<sup>1</sup> M. Abel Lefranc<sup>2</sup> parle de 'sécheresse mémorable.' Il ajoute que les mois 'brûlants' de l'été 1532 durent être pénibles à supporter à Lyon, 'ville de tout temps réputée pour ses chaleurs excessives.' Dois-je dire que je ne sache pas que les chaleurs soient plus 'excessives' à Lyon que dans la plupart des villes de France? Mais ce qui importe, c'est d'examiner les documents auxquels M. Abel Lefranc fait appel pour pouvoir assurer que 'cette mémorable année 1532 [. . .] fut marquée par une chaleur insolite et continue dont on garda le souvenir en France.' C'est la *Chronique parisienne de Pierre Driart, chambrier de Saint-Victor (1522-1535)*<sup>3</sup> qui est, d'abord, invoquée. Qu'y lisons-nous? Que le mois de mai 1532 fut 'moult chault, et plus qu'il n'estoit memoire de nul vivant avoir esté auparavant.'<sup>4</sup> Qu'en juin, 'le vin fut à grand marché, veu que les vignes quasy partout avoient esté toutes quasy gelées.'<sup>5</sup> Mais Pierre Driart ne parle pas du tout du temps qu'il a fait, ni en juillet, ni en août. Ce n'est que pour le mois de septembre, et à la fin de la chronique de ce mois, qu'il est noté ceci: 'Il fut fort beau temps durant lesdictes vendenges comme il n'avoit faict beau l'aoust precedent, et fut l'esté long, car, depuis le premier jour du moys de may jusques au jour de Toussains ensuivans, il fit fort chault et beau temps et si eust on de la pluye par fois assez, de sorte . . .'<sup>6</sup> Où M. Abel Lefranc trouve-t-il un témoignage qui lui permette de parler de 'la grande sécheresse' de 1532? Quels textes doit-on alléguer pour pouvoir affirmer: 'Jamais l'été n'avait été si long ni si brûlant'? M. Abel Lefranc fait appel à Jean Bouchet dont je

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The portable Rabelais*, sel . . . by Samuel Putnam (New York, 1946), p. 24: 'it was the great summer drought of 1532 that gave Rabelais the idea for his *Pantagruel*.'

<sup>2</sup> Rabelais, *Oeuvres* . . . (Paris, 1922) III, pp. xxv et xxvi.

<sup>3</sup> *Mémoires de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Île-de-France*, XXII (1895), 67-178.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.—C'est une allusion aux gelées du 18 avril (cf. *ibid.*, p. 156).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 159. En note, l'éditeur indique qu'il manque sans doute une ligne dont le sens se reconstitue aisément.

peux consulter les *Annales d'Aquitaine*.<sup>7</sup> Mais M. Lefranc rapporte seulement que les 'astrologiens' dirent que les fièvres 'procédaient des "trop extrêmes et furieuses chaleurs" de cette période.' En conclusion, je dois dire que je n'ai jamais trouvé d'allusion,<sup>8</sup> dans les textes du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, à la 'sécheresse mémorable' de 1532.<sup>9</sup>

MARCEL FRANÇON

Harvard University

### LE MIRACLE JUIF

The expression is associated with the author of the *Histoire du peuple d'Israël*. In the introductory section to his *Prière sur l'Acropole* Renan writes:

L'impression que me fit Athènes est de beaucoup la plus forte que j'aie jamais ressentie. . . Jusque-là, j'avais cru que la perfection n'est pas de ce monde; une seule chose me paraissait se rapprocher de l'absolu. Depuis longtemps, je ne croyais plus au miracle, dans le sens propre du mot; cependant la destinée unique du peuple juif, aboutissant à Jésus et au christianisme, m'apparaissait comme quelque chose de tout à fait à part. Or voici qu'à côté du *miracle juif* venait se placer pour moi le miracle grec. . .

In their little edition of the *Prière* (Manchester Univ. Press, 1934, p. 41) Messrs. E. Vinaver and T. B. L. Webster indicated that some of the descriptive material on the Parthenon "is strangely reminiscent of Chateaubriand's description of the Parthenon in his *Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem*." They also pointed out that there is agreement in the ideas of the two writers with regard

<sup>7</sup> *Les Annales d'Aquitaine* . . . par Jean Bouchet, édit. dernière et nouvelle (Poitiers, 1644), p. 469: 'extremes et furieuses chaleurs, qui firent és mois de May et Iuin.'

<sup>8</sup> Au contraire, j'ai relevé un passage où il est déclaré, vers 1534, que, depuis quelques années, les étés étaient si froids qu'on ne les distinguait guère des hivers (Cf. J. Larnac, *Louise Labé* [Paris, 1934]).—Le mois de janvier 1533 fut moins froid que de coutume; il fut 'bien doux et beau' (Cf. *Chronique parisienne* . . . p. 161).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Rabelais, *Pantagruel*, éd. crit. p. V. L. Saulnier (Paris, 1946), p. xiii: 'la grande sécheresse . . . 1532 . . .'.—P.-L. Larcher, *Le parfum de Combray* (Paris, 1945), p. 63: 'L'extrême sécheresse qui désola la Beauce en 1552' [*sic*].

to the harmony of Greek art in contrast with the barbarous monuments of Italy and France. Mlle A. Poirier (*Les idées artistiques de C.*, p. 270) was likewise struck by the resemblances in the two works, and evidence of Renan being inspired by the *Itinéraire* can be gathered from M. J. Pommier's *Ernest Renan: Travaux de jeunesse* (Paris, 1931, p. 203). It seems very likely, therefore, that the stimulus for the creation and use of the expression by Renan comes from one of the most sympathetic and beautiful pages that Chateaubriand ever wrote about any people. At any rate it is worth while calling attention to it for it is as significant today as it was yesterday:

Tandis que la nouvelle Jérusalem sort ainsi du désert, brillante de clarté, jetez les yeux entre la montagne de Sion et le Temple; voyez cet autre petit peuple qui vit séparé du reste des habitants de la cité. Objet particulier de tous les mépris, il baisse la tête sans se plaindre; il souffre toutes les avanies sans demander justice; il se laisse accabler de coups sans soupirer; on lui demande sa tête: il la présente au cimetière. Si quelque membre de cette société proscrite vient à mourir, son compagnon ira, pendant la nuit, l'enterrer furtivement dans la vallée de Josaphat, à l'ombre du temple de Salomon. Pénétrez dans la demeure de ce peuple, vous le trouverez dans une affreuse misère, faisant lire un livre mystérieux à des enfants qui, à leur tour, le feront lire à leurs enfants. Ce qu'il faisoit il y a cinq mille ans, ce peuple le fait encore. Il a assisté dix-sept fois à la ruine de Jérusalem, et rien ne peut le décourager; rien ne peut l'empêcher de tourner ses regards vers Sion. Quand on voit les Juifs dispersés sur la terre, selon la parole de Dieu, on est surpris sans doute: mais, pour être frappé d'un étonnement surnaturel, il faut les retrouver à Jérusalem; il faut voir ces légitimes maîtres de la Judée esclaves et étrangers dans leur propre pays; il faut les voir attendant, sous toutes les oppressions, un roi qui doit les délivrer. Ecrasés par la Croix qui les condamne, et qui est plantée sur leurs têtes, cachés près du temple dont il ne reste pas pierre sur pierre, ils demeurent dans leur déplorable aveuglement. Les Perses, les Grecs, les Romains ont disparu de la terre; et un petit peuple, dont l'origine précéda celle de ces grands peuples, existe encore sans mélange dans les décombres de sa patrie. Si quelque chose, parmi les nations, porte le caractère du miracle, nous pensons que ce caractère est ici. Et qu'y a-t-il de plus merveilleux, même aux yeux du philosophe, que cette rencontre de l'antique et de la nouvelle Jérusalem au pied du Calvaire: la première s'affligeant à l'aspect du sépulcre de Jésus-Christ ressuscité; la seconde se consolant auprès du seul tombeau qui n'aura rien à rendre à la fin des siècles! (*Itinéraire*, ed. E. Malakis, Baltimore, 1946, II, 203).

EMILE MALAKIS

The Johns Hopkins University



## MELVILLE'S ART: ONE ASPECT

Van Wyck Brooks, writing a score of years ago and under the influence of Melville's early biographers, declared that "Melville at thirty-five had outlived the literary illusion; he had come to despise the written word."<sup>1</sup> I think it safe to say that no one who has kept abreast of Melville scholarship would make such an assertion today; even though it is not yet a long time since E. L. Grant Watson, representing a whole school of thought upon the matter, described *Pierre* dramatically as a kind of defiant swan song, after which Melville subsided into silence.<sup>2</sup>

Anyone can see at a glance, of course, that a change occurred in Melville's career after 1851. Unable to sustain the high power of *Moby-Dick*, Melville turned from the sea to inland subjects and in part from the novel to the tale. Somewhat later he abjured prose altogether and, until the closing years of his life, produced poetry almost exclusively. But, whatever the form, he continued to write and to some extent continued to publish.<sup>3</sup>

There was no lessening of Melville's mental activity—indeed, of his intellectual and spiritual growth—after 1851; the briefest glance at the most recent American book on Melville's thought should convince one of that.<sup>4</sup> Yet his writings after *Moby-Dick*, with minor exceptions and in spite of many evidences of great literary skill and his continuing interest in literary creation, are for the most part less important and less generally successful than the brilliant galaxy of sea stories which preceded them—a collection to which he added one of the most precious pieces long years later in *Billy Budd*.

It is obviously presumptuous to ask of any writer that his work remain consistently on the highest plane or that he produce, instead of a solitary masterpiece, a succession of them; one is tempted,

<sup>1</sup> Van Wyck Brooks, *Emerson and Others* (New York, 1927), p. 195.

<sup>2</sup> E. L. Grant Watson, "Melville's *Pierre*," *NEQ*, III, 195-234 (April, 1930).

<sup>3</sup> Harrison Hayford, in his unpublished doctoral dissertation, *Hawthorne and Melville: A Biographical and Critical Study* (Yale University, 1945), ably presents this point of view.

<sup>4</sup> William Ellery Sedgwick, *Herman Melville: The Tragedy of Mind* (Cambridge, 1944).

nevertheless, to wonder why Melville, who in 1852<sup>5</sup> certainly had no intention of giving up his literary career in spite of its unsatisfactory financial returns,<sup>6</sup> never quite regained, until forty years later, the subtle mastery of his materials which he exhibited in varying degrees between *Typee* and *Moby-Dick*. Surely nothing so simple as his troublesome eyesight or a fall from a wagon can explain the change.

I think the explanation lies in the type of writer that Melville was—in the nature of his art. For in Melville we perceive not a literary inventor but an assimilator. He may be said to have recorded rather than devised most of the incidents in his major works. His two chief sources apparently consisted in his reading and his own experience. To make this distinction of terms clear, one has merely to compare Melville with Poe, the inventor *par excellence*.

Charles R. Anderson and others have already identified many of the sources from which Melville drew for his early works such materials as were not suggested by his own direct observation.<sup>7</sup> For *Typee*, *Omoo*, *Redburn*, and *White-Jacket* the framework is clearly the life which Melville knew at first hand and which by its hardships, brutality, mystery, and color so deeply impressed him. *Mardi*, laid in a setting similar to these and recounting in part his physical as well as mental sorrows and joys, depends for unity upon its allegory. Finally, in *Moby-Dick*, we see the miraculous blending of Melville's actual experience, his reading, and the leaven of his metaphorical philosophizing; nearly a quarter of the book, it may

<sup>5</sup> His published works after this date, besides *Pierre*, include *Israel Potter*, *The Confidence-Man*, a group of tales and sketches (among them "The Encantadas" and "Benito Cereno") of which a number were collected in *The Piazza Tales*, *Battle-Pieces* and *Aspects of the War*, *Clarel*, *John Marr and Other Sailors*, and *Timoleon*, besides additional miscellaneous items in the periodicals. Hayford points out that Melville's attempts to secure a government position began long before his so-called literary "retirement" and not as a result of a determination to give up writing.

<sup>6</sup> Though the income from his books was meager, Melville was never, like Hawthorne, in anything resembling real poverty. See William Charvat, "Melville's Income," *American Literature*, xv, 251-261 (November, 1943).

<sup>7</sup> See Charles R. Anderson, *Melville in the South Seas* (New York, 1939).

be noted, consists in descriptive materials based upon Beale<sup>8</sup> and other authorities on the natural history of the whale.

When he finished *Moby-Dick*, Melville had well-nigh exhausted the rich vein of literary ore out of which his first six novels were mined. He had completed the narrative of his years before the mast; and to supply a framework for *Pierre*, he chose a setting vaguely reminiscent of his own boyhood home, but utterly land-locked. The results were less happy, whatever noble characteristics the book may be admitted to have. From this point on, most of Melville's prose pieces appear to be traceable to one source or another among his library books or his acquaintances.<sup>9</sup> It was not until the last years of his life that Melville reopened the abandoned mine of his youthful experience and extracted a final ingot as valuable as any of the others.

In recognizing this aspect of Melville's art, one does not say, of course, that the only value of his writings lies in their faithfulness to his experience. Melville was undoubtedly at his best when he fused with his actual knowledge of events his reading, his gleanings from conversation, his ironic or outraged comments upon the occurrences of his times, and his gropings among spiritual and philosophical ideas. His imagination chewed upon the incidents he recorded until they lost the shape of journalism and became the richly subjective utterances of universal experience. When, through sheer exhaustion of supply, he turned perforce to those emptier phases of his life uncharged with the intense electric of his maritime adventures, or when he found himself relying entirely upon his reading, Melville was obviously not at his best.

By 1852 the grand storehouse from which he drew his major situations had been emptied, and there was no second young manhood from the bounty of which to refill it. Melville's art then gradually became less effective, and he deserted prose for the com-

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Beale, *The Natural History of the Sperm Whale . . .*, etc. (London, 1839). A study of Melville's dependence upon Beale is contained in my unpublished doctoral dissertation, *Melville and Nineteenth-Century Science* (Yale University, 1944).

<sup>9</sup> To this statement there are, without doubt, some notable exceptions. But Merton Sealts, in the preface and notes to his forthcoming edition of Melville's miscellaneous prose, points out a number of hitherto unsuspected sources for the shorter pieces.

pensating rhythms of poetry. Only the germ of *Billy Budd*, "like one of those seeds taken out of the Egyptian Pyramids, which, after being three thousand years a seed and nothing but a seed, being planted in English soil, . . . developed itself [and] grew to greenness,"<sup>10</sup> remained for later fruition.

TYRUS HILLWAY

New London Junior College,  
New London, Connecticut

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### CALEB WILLIAMS AND MARTIN FABER: A CONTRAST

The fate of William Gilmore Simms' first book, *Martin Faber*, has been neglect or dismissal with the critical tag "a Godwinian tale of crime."<sup>1</sup> In an extension of the latter dictum, surface similarities between *The Adventures of Caleb Williams* and *Martin Faber* have been pointed out as significant.<sup>2</sup> However, a close study of the details in the two stories will bear out Simms's defense of his own originality.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>10</sup> From Melville's letter to Hawthorne in Julian Hawthorne, *Hawthorne and His Wife* (Boston and New York, 1884), I, 405.

<sup>1</sup> *Cambridge History of American Literature*, I, 314; Carl Van Doren, *The American Novel* (New York, 1940), p. 51. Also W. P. Trent, *William Gilmore Simms* (New York, 1892), p. 81: "... however original Simms may have thought himself, . . . he was simply following . . . the devious, dark, and uncanny paths where Godwin had once walked with a stately tread."

<sup>2</sup> Floyd H. Deen's brief study, "The Genesis of Martin Faber in Caleb Williams," *Modern Language Notes*, LIX, 315-317 (May, 1944), admits a difference in the authors' aims, but is inadequate and misleading. Deen notes that both stories reveal "the maniacal tendencies of an abnormal character"; that both are written in the first person; that both murderers confess their crime to their best friend; and that there is a mistreated Emily in both.

The purpose of the present study is to illustrate a significant disparity between the first three of these superficially identical features. As for the last-named, however, it would probably have caused Simms some chagrin: writing, as he did, when the subject of British influence was so tender a sore, he may naturally have wished at all events to avoid using in his story so tangible an element as a prominent character's name that would have left him open to the charge of plagiarism.

<sup>3</sup> " 'Martin Faber' belongs to the family of which Godwin's 'Caleb

To begin, it would be difficult to defend the contention that Falkland is "abnormal" or that he betrays "maniacal tendencies." All his actions, in truth, point to uncommon virtue: his solicitous attention to the poet Clare, his faithful befriending of Emily against Tyrrel's persecution, his remonstrating with Tyrrel in behalf of young Hawkins, and his general deportment and good reputation in the community. He eventually murders Tyrrel, but the latter has annoyed, humiliated, and even assaulted him physically. He permits the two Hawkinses to die for this murder, but the instinct of self-preservation responsible for his silence is thoroughly normal; significantly enough, the Hawkinses are people whom he has previously gone out of his way to befriend. And if more evidence is needed, consider Caleb's own confession that "A nobler spirit lived not among the sons of men."<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, Martin is Evil incarnate. In him, Simms carefully points out, "All the offences which the criminal usually commits against society are studiously thrown together."<sup>5</sup> As a boy, he wilfully disgraces his first teacher. When his mistress Emily threatens to expose him, he murders her. He watches Harding and his own wife Constance writhe in torment at their knowledge of his crime, and throws them together, hoping to surprise them in intimacy. Awaiting execution, Martin curses the apologetic Harding. The knife Harding has reluctantly given him to cheat the gallows with, he uses in trying to kill Constance after she refuses to pray for God's curse on Harding. He is even too spineless to kill himself, and is led off to the gallows in awful terror. He has, in short, not been capable of a single act of true kindness in his life.<sup>6</sup>

As for the fact that both stories are told in the first person—this would be significant, were it not that the disparity of the two authors' aims reduces it to nothing more than coincidence. Simms,

Williams' is the best known model. But those who read the two works will fail to see any imitation. . . ." (Letter to Rufus W. Griswold, December, 1846, in Boston Public Library.)

<sup>4</sup> *The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (New York: Greenberg, 1926), p. 410.

<sup>5</sup> "Advertisement to the Second Edition," *Martin Faber*, etc. (New York: Harper), 1837, I, p. ix.

<sup>6</sup> Even his boyhood befriending of a school-mate was dictated by maliciousness.

it is clear, finds the first-person narration indispensable to his avowed aim:

The only difference between the narrative of crime given in 'Martin Faber' and that furnished by the newspapers daily, consists in this little particular. The author of the work has striven to trace it to its causes—to describe its sources—to probe the wound, and to declare its depths.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, Martin must tell his own story: the *criminal* must account for his criminality. This he does, dwelling meaningfully on each crime.

However, since Godwin is primarily concerned with the theme of social justice, the origin and effects of Falkland's "criminality" are only of secondary interest. Consequently, that part of *Caleb Williams* which deals with Falkland's decline from complete virtuousness to murder, remorse, and physical decay is told in retrospect, and *not* by Falkland himself, nor even by Caleb, the narrator, but by the steward Collins.

Similarly, the divergence of the authors' aims precludes any stressing of the fact that both murderers confess their crime to their best friend. Caleb's curiosity about Falkland's isolation and the mysterious trunk leads him to suspect Falkland, but it is a dispassionate curiosity. Thus, when the harassed squire is forced to confession, Caleb's loyalty continues, and it is only when he foresees eternal persecution at Falkland's hands that Caleb publicly denounces his master.

On the other hand, no one hounds Martin into confession. He suffers only fleeting remorse, and resumes his former pursuits, their pleasure undiminished by any feeling of guilt. When he confesses, he does so spontaneously, to impress the naive Harding,<sup>8</sup> and is moved as much by a feeling of self-importance<sup>9</sup> as by that of a mysterious powerlessness.<sup>10</sup> Harding, of course, is amazed, and

<sup>7</sup> "Advertisement," p. ix.

<sup>8</sup> "I surveyed him with close attention for a few moments . . . with a deliberation that, under all the circumstances, was significant of a momentary madness. . . ." (*Martin Faber*, p. 83.)

<sup>9</sup> ". . . the huge stride which I had taken in crime contributed largely to the sense of my own importance. Such is our nature. We are proud of the power to destroy. . . . There is something elevating—something attractive to the human brute, even in being a destroyer. . . ." (*Ibid.*, p. 86.)

<sup>10</sup> "What prompted me to the narration I know now. I could not resist the impulse—I was compelled to speak." (*Ibid.*, p. 83.) Like the Ancient



refuses to believe him. He shields Martin merely because he is shocked by the enormity of the crime, and hopes that Martin will retract his confession. When his denunciation of Martin is publicly scorned, he reproaches Martin very much as Falkland might have reproached the murdered Tyrrel:

"... for years . . . I have been contending for glory—for a name . . . This you knew. . . . In one hour—without an object—to satisfy a wanton caprice— . . . you have destroyed me . . . I am banished from that which has been the life-blood of my being—the possession of a goodly, of a mighty name! I have no farther use in life."<sup>11</sup>

Whereupon, consistent with his course of self-righteousness, he begins the spying that finally convicts Martin, and hunts for clues as relentlessly as Falkland hunts Caleb from town to town. In fact, if there is any parallel here, it is between Falkland and Harding—not between Falkland and Martin.

And when to the evidence of the above disparities one adds the fact that *Martin Faber* is in effect an expanded, fictional re-working of a partly-factual "Confessions of a Murderer" which Simms had published in a Charleston gazette and newspaper some time before,<sup>12</sup> it may seriously be doubted that Godwin's novel had any noticeable influence on the shaping of *Martin Faber*.

EDWARD STONE

Durham, N. C.

#### EMERSON'S BROTHER AND THE MOUSETRAP

The mousetrap sentence is one of the best known in all literature: "If a man can write a better book, preach a better sermon, or make a better mouse-trap, than his neighbor, though he builds his house in the woods, the world will make a beaten path to his door." Nor is there, after Burton Stevenson's exhaustive examination into the claims and counter-claims,<sup>1</sup> a shred of doubt that the sentence is

Mariner, he says, he was made "in spite of every obstacle, to thrust his terrible narrative into the ears of the unwilling listener." (*Ibid.*, p. 86.)

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.

<sup>12</sup> Trent, p. 76.

<sup>1</sup> Burton Stevenson, "The Mouse Trap," Item 7 (unpaged) of *The Colophon*, Part XIX (Volume v, December, 1934).

one which Ralph Waldo Emerson interpolated into one of his California lectures in the spring of 1871, probably the lecture on "Hospitality and How to Make Homes Happy" delivered in Oakland, California, on May 18. There can hardly be any doubt of that. After the sentence had been ascribed to Emerson in the book of aphorisms compiled by the ladies of an Oakland church in 1889<sup>2</sup> and had been used by an advertising man of the West Publishing Company, of Minneapolis, and had been laid claim to by no less an Emersonian than Elbert Hubbard, there began to be doubts that the sentence was Emerson's. To settle the doubts the West Publishing Company wrote to Mrs. Sarah S. Beach Yule, one of the Oakland ladies who had copyrighted the book of aphorisms, and in its house organ *The Docket* for February, 1912, quoted her reply: "To the best of my knowledge and belief, I copied it in my handbook from an address delivered long ago, it being my custom to write everything there that I thought particularly good, if expressed in concise form; and when we were compiling *Borrowings*, I drew on this old book freely." Mr. Stevenson, after wondering whether sixteen year old Sarah Beach copied it from a newspaper report of Emerson's Oakland lecture or whether she wrote it down after hearing the lecture, concludes:

But whether she copied it, or whether she heard it, there can be no reasonable doubt that it was actually used by Emerson in one of these lectures—a happy thought, perhaps, which came to him at the moment of delivery, for there is no record of his ever having used it anywhere else.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Stevenson, along with other Emerson scholars, knew that Emerson had written something strikingly similar to the mouse-trap sentence in 1855 under the heading *Common Fame* in his journal:

If a man has good corn, or wood, or boards, or pigs, to sell, or can make better chairs or knives, crucibles or church organs, than anybody else, you will find a broad hard-beaten road to his house, though it be in the woods. And if a man knows the law, people will find him out, though he live in a pine shanty, and resort to him.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Borrowings*. Compiled by Ladies of the First Unitarian Church of Oakland, California. San Francisco: Murdock & Co., Printers, 1889. The book was copyrighted by Sarah S. B. Yule and Mary S. Keene. The mouse-trap quotation appeared on page 38.

<sup>3</sup> Stevenson, *loc. cit.*, p. [8].

<sup>4</sup> *Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, VIII, 528-529 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1912).

That is as far back as the mousetrap idea has been traced. But the mention in the Journal passage of a man who "knows the law" suggests that it can be traced farther back, for Emerson had three brothers who knew the law. His brother William, on Staten Island, was a successful lawyer all his life. His brother Edward was studying law in the law offices of Daniel Webster when his health failed and forced him to seek restoration in the West Indies, where he died just before Emerson and his mother moved to Concord in 1834 and became boarders at the Old Manse.

The youngest brother, Charles Chauncey Emerson, knew the law also. He had studied law in Cambridge Law School, then in Webster's office in Boston, and finally in the office of Samuel Hoar in Concord. Charles impressed people. Oliver Wendell Holmes said of him in college, "He was for me the very ideal of an embodied celestial intelligence."<sup>5</sup> When he died, Dr. William Ellery Channing said that all New England mourned his loss. Harriet Martineau called him "the adored Charles."<sup>6</sup> No one adored him more than his brother Ralph, unless it be Elizabeth Hoar, daughter of his mentor and then his fiancée. Ralph and Lidian Emerson planned when Charles should have married Elizabeth to build a wing onto the house in Concord so that they might all live under one roof. And when Charles had died, Elizabeth, though living in the home of her parents, came into Ralph Emerson's home and into his life as a sister. These two especially cherished every memory of Charles and every story about him.

And one of the stories, surely a family story because it is told by Elizabeth's brother in his autobiography nearly seventy years after the death of Charles, reminds one of the mousetrap sentence:

Mr. Webster, who was consulted as to where [Charles] Emerson should settle, said, "Settle! Let him settle anywhere. Let him settle in the midst of the back woods of Maine, the clients will throng after him."<sup>7</sup>

What Webster said about Charles Emerson surely would have lived in the memory of his brother and of his fiancée, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that an echo of Webster's words could be heard thirty-five years later in Emerson's impromptu sentence in California.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in George F. Hoar, *Autobiography of Seventy Years*, I, 63-64 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

There is a sequel to the story about the man who can make a better mousetrap or the man who knows the law. Charles did not settle in the back woods of Maine. He settled in Concord, Massachusetts, in 1833. He lived there less than three years, not long enough for the clients to throng after him as Webster had promised nor for the "world to make a beaten path to his door." But he did attract one man to Concord. Charles Emerson was in Concord long enough for Ralph Waldo Emerson to take the path there. Ralph gave up his plan to settle in the Berkshires and turned his life toward Concord in order to be near Charles. A few months later he attended the funeral of Charles on Staten Island. Next day he wrote to Lidian back in Concord, "I determined to live in Concord, as you know, because he was there, and now that the immense promise of his maturity is destroyed, I feel not only unfastened there and adrift but a sort of shame at living at all."<sup>8</sup>

RAYMOND ADAMS

*University of North Carolina*

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CHRISTOPHER PEARSE CRANCH'S "GNOSIS":  
AN ERROR IN TITLE

Of all of Christopher Pearse Cranch's poems, the one that is most often reprinted in anthologies is "Gnosis." The reason for this may be twofold: it is most typical of its author's best writing; and it is truly representative of the transcendental poetry produced by the Concord Group. However, surrounding the history of this poem and its incorrect title there are certain circumstances whose narration, although not devoid of humorous implications, may serve to lighten the burden of the teacher of American literature who has had to wrench the poem, to whatever extent, to make it fit its title-frame.

The original title of "Gnosis," upon its first appearance in print in the *Dial* for July, 1840, was "Stanzas."<sup>1</sup> When Cranch's first

<sup>8</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson to Lidian Emerson, May 12, 1836. Ralph L. Rusk, ed., *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, II, 20 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939).

<sup>1</sup> I, 99.

collection of poems was published in 1844, each poem was headed by a title in gothic lettering. The title given to this poem was "Enosis,"<sup>2</sup> and the running title on the following page was clearly printed, in small roman block capitals, likewise as "Enosis." So far as the meaning of the poem is concerned, there can hardly be any doubt that "Enosis," the correct title, is a more felicitous choice. A transliteration of "Enosis" (unity, union, combination into one), the word, as any brief examination of the poem will demonstrate, has a clarifying effect and gives more point and direction than does "Gnosis."

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, as editor of *The Estray*, a collection of poetry published in 1847, quite obviously used the 1844 edition of Cranch's *Poems*, for he reprinted the poem with its proper title, "Enosis."<sup>3</sup> Yet, a search through about seventy-five collections of American poetry published between 1847, the date of his collection, and the present, reveals that Cranch's poem was thereafter generally reprinted under one of two titles, either "Stanzas"<sup>4</sup> or "Gnosis."

The first misreading of the title that I have been able to discover occurs in *Harper's Cyclopedia of British and American Poetry*, edited by Epes Sargent, and published posthumously in 1882, Sargent having died December 13, 1880. The title reads "Gnosis," and the reader is referred to a note at the end of the poem which states: "Enosis—knowing."<sup>5</sup> Unless there is an earlier instance of editorial error than this, one is forced to the reluctant conclusion that the editor was inexcusably careless in his collecting or editing. Until an earlier misreading is uncovered—in which case the offending editor of that volume may be made the recipient of the foregoing stricture—Epes Sargent (or the editor, if there was one, who took over his duties at his death) must accept the blame for being the first to misprint the title, thereby warping the poem's meaning.

Of those examined, the next collection after *Harper's Cyclopedia* to list the poem as "Gnosis" is that edited by George Willis Cooke and published in 1903, *The Poets of Transcendentalism*.<sup>6</sup> The brief

<sup>2</sup> *Poems* (New York, 1884), p. 52 f.

<sup>3</sup> *The Estray* (Boston, 1847), p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> E. g., R. W. Griswold's *The Poets and Poetry of America* (1842), uses the title "Stanzas," obviously following the *Dial*. This remained unchanged in all subsequent editions.

<sup>5</sup> P. 714.

<sup>6</sup> (New York), p. 85 f.

notes on the poets and their works in this volume seem to indicate that Cooke was more diligent than most of the earlier editors in checking his sources. He says of this poem that "... 'Gnosis' ... first appeared in 'The Dial.' In that periodical the title of 'Gnosis' was 'Stanzas.'"<sup>7</sup> This raises the question of whether Cooke took the title from *Harper's Cyclopaedia*—or another anthology not as yet found—or whether he made the same error as had Epes Sargent.

In any event, the error seems to have become confirmed by 1903. From that date onward any anthology—so far as it has been possible to ascertain—which has printed Cranch's poem has carried the incorrect title, "Gnosis." This is all the more curious in view of the fact that Leonora Cranch Scott, in her biography of her father, *The Life and Letters of Christopher Pearse Cranch*, refers to the poem as "Enosis."<sup>8</sup>

It is to be hoped that the correction will be deemed of sufficient importance to warrant change of title in all future anthologies of American poetry.

SIDNEY E. LIND

*Rutgers University*

#### WORDS INTO IMAGES IN CHAUCER'S *HOUS OF FAME*

In Book II of Chaucer's *Hous of Fame* the eagle, bearing Chaucer between his claws to the Hous of Fame, explains why all sound must rise to Fame's dwelling place.<sup>1</sup> The discussion of the way in which words are received into the Hous of Fame reaches this conclusion in Book II:

Loo, to the Hous of Fame yonder,  
Thou wost now how, cometh every speche;

But understand now ryght wel this,  
Whan any speche ycomen ys  
Up to the paleys, anon-ryght  
Hyt wexeth lyk the same wight  
Which that the word in erthe spak,

<sup>7</sup> P. 312.

<sup>8</sup> (New York, 1917), p. 29.

<sup>1</sup> Chaucer's *Complete Works*, edited by F. N. Robinson (Cambridge, 1933), *Hous of Fame*, II, ll. 729-851.



Be hyt clothed red or blak;  
And hath so verray hys lyknesse  
That spak the word, that thou wilt gesse  
That it the same body be,  
Man or woman, he or she.<sup>2</sup>

Although parallels for the physics of the rise of sound have been pointed out, no one, so far as I know, has presented a source or an analogue for these lines which describe the word's taking the image of the person who spoke it on earth. W. O. Sypherd, in his study of the *Hous of Fame*,<sup>3</sup> does not mention this passage, and it is quite probable that, as Sypherd suggests for other lines which have no parallel, these lines were developed wholly from the poet's imagination. There is, however, an analogue for the passage to be found in the Hebrew work, the *Zohar*. Here R. Simeon, R. Jose, R. Judah, and others are discussing wisdom and prayer, and at the close of a statement of the significance of the holy words in the recital of the Sanctification, R. Simeon proceeds to a discourse upon the sixteenth verse of the Third Chapter of Malachi: 'Then they that fear the Lord spoke with one another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that fear the Lord, and that thought upon him.' He interprets the words in this manner, saying that the verse signifies

the repetition of the words spoken on earth in the upper world, by all the sacred hosts and legions. For the words of the holy Law spoken here below ascend on high, where multitudes come to meet them to take them up and present them before the Holy King, there to be adorned with many crowns woven of the supernal radiances. All these words, then, are *self-spoken*, as it were, before the Most High King. . . . In the verse cited there is twice mention of 'them that fear the Lord'; the first indicates the men themselves as they are here below, and the second their images as reflected in their words that ascend on high. This esoteric doctrine is found in the Book of Enoch, where it says that all the words of exposition uttered by the righteous on earth are adorned with crowns and are arrayed before the Holy One, blessed be He, who delights Himself with them. They then descend and come up again before His presence in the image of that righteous man who gave expression to them, and God then delights Himself with that image. The words, then, are inscribed in 'a book of remembrance

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ll. 1070-1081.

<sup>3</sup> W. O. Sypherd, *Studies in Chaucer's 'Hous of Fame.'* Chaucer Society Publication, Second Series, No. 39 (London, 1907).

before Him,' so as to endure for evermore. . . . And you, Companions, behold, the Holy One disports Himself now with those words you uttered, and you are standing now before your Master as represented by your holy images. . . . In this way the righteous are destined in the future to be distinguished in the eyes of all men, and to make their holy countenance manifest before all the world. . . .

At this point R. Simeon noticed R. Jose meditating worldly matters. Said he to him: 'Jose, arise and make complete your image, inasmuch as you are short one letter.' R. Jose then rose up and joyously absorbed himself in expositions of the Torah. R. Simeon then looked at him again, and said: 'R. Jose, now you are whole before the Ancient of Days, and your image is complete.'<sup>4</sup>

The passage is, of course, not a perfect parallel. In the *Zohar* the words which ascend are holy words, spoken by righteous people, and they are received by a Divine and Supreme Being. In the *Hous of Fame* all words, 'red or blak,' spoken by every kind of man, rise to Fame. Here the words are not crowned as they are before God. It is, however, a striking similarity that in both passages the words which have risen to a region above earth now assume the image of the person who spoke them.

The *Zohar* was compiled in the thirteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Although it is not impossible that Chaucer may have heard about the work, it is improbable, in the light of existing evidence, that he could have known it well. I present the passage in the *Zohar* not as a source, but merely as an interesting parallel.

JERRY TURNER WILLIAMS

Vanderbilt University

#### THOMAS TRAHERNE AND HENRY MORE

Since Traherne's first twentieth-century appearance, not a few of his critics have pointed out a general parallel between his work and that of his contemporaries, the Cambridge Platonists. While most such comments seem to assume a debt on Traherne's part, none has attempted to establish actual verbal proof of such a debt.<sup>1</sup> Nothing

<sup>4</sup> *The Zohar*, trans. by Maurice Simon and Dr. Paul P. Levertoff (London, 1933), iv, 237-239 (Exodus, 217a-217b).

<sup>5</sup> J. Abelson, Introduction to the *Zohar*, trans. by Maurice Simon and Harry Sperling (London, 1931), I, x. Cf. Christian D. Ginsburg, *The Kabbalah* (London, 1925), 167-176.

<sup>1</sup> Gertrude Scherer, "More and Traherne," *MLN*, xxxiv (1919), 49-50,

of Cudworth's or of Whichcote's was published till after Traherne's death. Culverwel's *Light of Nature* and Smith's *Select Discourses* came off the press during his boyhood; and throughout virtually his whole life (from 1642 on) More was turning out books at a prolific rate. It would be almost inconceivable that Traherne should not be conversant with the work of the leading liberal theologian of his time, a man whose thought was certainly largely congenial with, if not actually formative of, his own. And Gladys Wade supplies what looks like proof positive of a connection between the two. In her account of Traherne's Commonplace Book she offers the following abridgement of one entry:

*Co-haesion.* A scientific extract, with what is possibly Traherne's own comment. "There is nothing so unconceivable to me as that holding together of the parts of Matter; which has so confounded me when I have seriously thought upon it that I have been prone to think with myself that the Germs of the World hold together not so much by Geometrie as some natural Magick. . . . Particles so little that it implies a contradiction they should be divided into less, for they are truly indivisible, and impenetrable in like manner. And therefore they touch one another as it were in smooth superficies: now therefore they hold together or what is the Principle of their Union is inconceivable."<sup>2</sup>

Now these are precisely Henry More's sentiments concerning matter. He had stated them repeatedly—at considerable length in *The Immortality of the Soul* (1659), again in his correspondence with Descartes (published in 1662). His conviction that matter could not hang together by itself was his main proof for the existence

is the only one who has offered verbal parallels, drawn from More's verse and Traherne's; these are close enough to be allowable, but not, I think, entirely convincing. In the main, however, Miss Scherer dwells upon similarity of ideas; so likewise do Paul Elmer More, "Thomas Traherne," *The Nation*, Feb. 18, 1909, 160-62; Gladys Willett, *Thomas Traherne* (Cambridge, 1919); E. N. S. Thompson, "Mysticism in Seventeenth Century English Literature," *SP*, XVIII (1921), 170-231; T. O. Beachcroft, "Traherne and the Doctrine of Felicity," *The Criterion*, IX (1930), 291-307, and "Traherne and the Cambridge Platonists," *Dublin Review*, CLXXXVI (1930), 278-90; Elizabeth Holmes, *Henry Vaughan and the Hermetic Philosophy* (Oxford, 1932); Hans Oskar Wilde, *Beiträge zur Englischen Literaturgeschichte des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Breslau, 1932). Queenie Iredale, *Thomas Traherne* (Oxford, 1935), p. 36, raises a lone voice to the effect that the Cambridge Platonists had very slight influence on Traherne.

<sup>2</sup> Gladys I. Wade, *Thomas Traherne: a Critical Biography* (Princeton, 1944), 254.

of spirit, his main reason for rejecting a "mechanical" in favor of a "spermatical" principle to govern the universe, the basis for his definitions of "substance," "body," and "spirit," with which he sought to confute Hobbes's materialism. And in 1668 he had summarized his theories in the *Divine Dialogues*:

. . . of itself it would be disunited into a *Congeries* of mere *Physical Monads*, that is, into so little particles, that it implies a contradiction they should be less. . . . There is no *Vinculum* imaginable in Matter to hold the parts together. For you know they are impenetrable, and therefore touch one another in smooth *Superficies*. How therefore can they hold together? What is the principle of their Union?<sup>a</sup>

Barring uncanny coincidence, it would appear that what Miss Wade calls "possibly Traherne's own comment" is really his digest of More's then newest and most comprehensive statement on the subject.

FRANCES L. COLBY

*The Ohio State University*

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## REVIEWS

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*Voltaire, Dryden and Heroic Tragedy.* By TRUSTEN WHEELER RUSSELL. New York: Columbia University Press, 1946. Pp. viii + 178. \$2.50.

This well-written dissertation is devoted primarily to Voltaire, his conception of tragedy, his choice of material, his style, and the relation of his tragedies to those of Dryden. This last topic has led the author to investigate critical opinion in both France and England in the later seventeenth century and the earlier eighteenth, as well as to discuss Dryden's idea of tragedy, defined as "heroic romance material raised to epic dignity by grandeur of style." Dr. Russell stresses resemblances between the two dramatists, considering the work of both as largely sprung from French critics like Rapin, Le Bossu, and Dacier, and from French heroic romances. He holds that it was Dryden rather than Shakespeare who represented English influence in Voltaire's tragedies, that Voltaire went directly to Dryden for parts of *Zaïre* and *Tancredé*, and that *Alzire* is an "adaptation" of the *Indian Emperour*.

<sup>a</sup> The First Dialogue (pp. 61-2 of the ed. London, 1713).

He makes it clear that there was a general resemblance between the two authors, but he neglects the facts that behind Dryden there was always Shakespeare, behind Voltaire there were Corneille and Racine. He exaggerates, too, the influence exerted by theorists upon Voltaire, who once wrote,<sup>1</sup> "Il y a bien plus à apprendre dans *Polyeucte* et dans *Cinna* que dans tous les préceptes de l'abbé d'Aubignac." Moreover, much of Dryden's violence, lack of preparation, and lack of unity was abhorrent to French dramatists; Voltaire never went so far in depicting physical heroism as did Dryden in the role of Almanzor; nor did Voltaire ever adopt so metaphorical a style, however much he may have been accused of being "épique."

Voltaire did not need Dryden either for examples of heroic tragedy, or for introducing into his text criticism of church and state. As old a play as Thomas Corneille's *Timocrate* (1656) amply satisfies the definition that Dr. Richardson gives of heroic tragedy; and Voltaire began to attack the church before there is any evidence that he had read Dryden. Already in his *Œdipe*<sup>2</sup> of 1718 he had made a character with whom we sympathize declare of priests that "notre crédulité fait toute leur science." If Dryden influenced him, it was not in the general idea of introducing religious and political comment, but only in certain details.

I admit that Dr. Richardson makes out a good case for Dryden as the source of Zaire's remark that one's religion is the result of one's education, for he shows that the corresponding passage in the *Indian Emperour* was copied into Voltaire's *sottisier*. On the other hand, his contention that Tancred's defending his beloved though he thinks she is guilty was suggested by the *Conquest of Grenada* is less probable than that Voltaire followed Mme de Fontaines's *Comtesse de Savoie*, which not only contains a similar situation, but refers to Tancred and to Sicily, as Dryden does not do. In regard to *Alzire* I find the evidence no more convincing. Dr. Richardson holds that Voltaire derived from the *Indian Emperour* the idea of writing a play about Spaniards and American Indians, the mention of torture, and the introduction of a benevolent Spaniard, but Voltaire had seen in his youth a French tragedy of which the scene is laid in Mexico, Ferrier's *Montézume*, while the reference to torture, little emphasized by Voltaire, and the presence of the kindly Spaniard may well have come from historical sources. The plots of the two plays, their characters, and their general tone are so distinctly different that I do not see how *Alzire* can possibly be called an adaptation of the *Indian Emperour*.

Dr. Richardson also goes too far in minimizing Shakespeare's influence and in magnifying Addison's. He establishes the fact that

<sup>1</sup> *Œuvres*, Moland edition, II, 47.

<sup>2</sup> In regard to this tragedy, Dr. R. merely notes that it resembles Corneille and Racine.

Voltaire's conception of tragedy is nearer to Dryden's than to Shakespeare's, and I quite agree that certain scholars have absurdly exaggerated the resemblance between *Othello* and *Zaire*, but I refuse to believe that the ghost in *Eriphyle* and in *Sémiramis* was not originally that of Hamlet's father, or that the use of French historical names was suggested by Dryden rather than by Shakespeare. On p. 64 Dr. Richardson states that Addison's *Cato* was "translated in 1714 by Boyer and produced on the Parisian stage. There it inspired Deschamps to write a *Cato*." As a matter of fact, Deschamps began his *Caton d'Utique* in 1712, a year before Addison's tragedy was acted or translated. I have compared the two plays without discovering any evidence of influence that cannot be explained by their common historical sources. It was Deschamps's play, not Boyer's translation of Addison, that was acted at the Comédie Française in 1714. Nor have I found any evidence that *Cato* influenced Voltaire's *Brutus*, the subject of which was dramatized in France by Mlle Bernard shortly before Voltaire's birth and again by his teacher, Father Porée.

There are other statements to be criticized:

P. 90, "*Mariamne* was laughed out of the theatre in 1724 because he [Voltaire] introduced some action in the English style." Voltaire offers a different explanation for the failure of his tragedy in its original form. The heroine's dying on the stage after taking poison is no more English than is the last scene in *Phèdre*. P. 98, "The noble example of *Alzire* has converted him [Gusman] to Christian charity." No, it is the approach of death that awakens Gusman's long dormant Christian principles. P. 103, "*Tancrède* was, perhaps the outstanding dramatic success of the entire century." It created no such excitement as de Belloy's *Siège de Calais* and was less frequently played in that century than *Rhadamiste*, *Inès*, *Œdipe*, *Zaire*, *Alzire*, or *Mérope*. Pp. 112-3, "The only plays which were based on any modern or national sources during the classical period were Racine's *Bajazet* (1672) and the *Comte d'Essex* (1678) of Thomas Corneille." Survival of an ancient error. To disprove the statement I need mention only Tristan's *Osman*, La Calprenède's *Jeanne d'Angleterre* and *Essex*, Regnault's *Marie Stuart*, Ferrier's *Anne de Bretagne*, Boyer's *Essex*.

The book ends with a quotation from Goethe: "great art will always have a moral effect, but the moral effect must not be held to have been the purpose of the artist." Voltaire's tragedies, then, according to Dr. Richardson, fail to exemplify great art. But a work of art may have qualities that transcend its author's moral intent, and it is often difficult to determine whether the moral lesson discovered by the reader was or was not the primary purpose of the writer. Voltaire obviously wrote *Mahomet*, one of his most striking tragedies and one that Goethe translated, to attack fanaticism, with special reference to the Catholic church, but just what was the moral purpose of his greatly inferior *Zulime* is hard to discover. In *Zaire* and *Mérope*, two of his most popular tragedies, he may well have had in mind the creation of pathetic situations rather than the desire to lead a crusade. His own statements must be used with caution, for his claims to morality may often have



been inspired by the desire to protect his tragedy from the censor, himself from the fate of Calas. And there can be no doubt that riming Alexandrines into tragedies was a major occupation of his long life. He began one when a boy at school and was still working at one when he was on his death-bed. Heroic or not, moralistic or not, a tragedy was always in the making. His chief guides were Corneille and Racine, but he sought at times to depart from their usage by following "epic doctrine," by seeking to "écraser l'infâme," by adding spectacle or pantomime, by enlarging geographically or chronologically the fields from which plots and characters might be derived. He took suggestions, not only from French, Greek, and Italian dramatists, but from English, less than Dr. Richardson believes, but enough to make his book worthy of careful consideration by all students of Voltaire and of Anglo-French relations in the eighteenth century.

H. CARRINGTON LANCASTER

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*Chateaubriand as a Critic of French Literature.* By CARLOS LYNES, JR. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1946. Pp. 129. \$1.25.

*Chateaubriand's Natural Scenery, A Study of his Descriptive Art.* By THOMAS CAPELL WALKER. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1946. Pp. 185. \$2.75.

Mr. Lynes's book should really bear the title, Chateaubriand as a critic of seventeenth century literature, since he devotes three fourths of his work to that period. Chateaubriand's literary criticisms, it is true, deal largely with the seventeenth century which he considered both Christian and artistically perfect, in contrast with the anti-religious and artistically sterile eighteenth century, and a source of inspiration for a new literature. His attitude to the classical age as a whole is followed by a detailed analysis of his criticisms of the theorists and poets, religious writers and thinkers, the great classical masters, La Bruyère and Fénelon. He rounds out the picture with comments on the salons and the *précieux*. Only Rousseau and Bernardin de St. Pierre appealed to him in the eighteenth century. His condemnation of the age of the *philosophes* is as great as his admiration for the preceding century. This contrast in emphasis, Mr. Lynes points out, leads up to Chateaubriand's purpose to bridge the gap between the nineteenth century and the seventeenth. To revive the ailing literature of his day Chateaubriand proposed that his contemporaries and successors seek Christian inspiration and thus hark back to the spirit of the seventeenth century, even while making use of the innovations of form and

style of the new period. As the literature of the Romantic period developed but failed to rejoin the tradition of the seventeenth century, Chateaubriand was disappointed and became hostile to the Romantic school. Lacking in sympathy though he was, and even envious of the younger writers' success, he was nevertheless influenced, as Mr. Lynes indicates, both in style and critical judgments by the new turn of Romanticism.

He concludes his study by noting the original quality of Chateaubriand's criticism, his contributions to the history of French criticism. It was Chateaubriand who first realized the melancholy and "the sense of the infinite in Pascal, the lyricism of Bossuet the 'poet,' the musicality and Christian character portrayal of Racine." He, too, first noted the "lyrical melancholy and sadness of La Fontaine" and the "aesthetic value of the serious side of Molière's comic genius." To these conclusions he was led "by his temperament, his taste and the nature of his creative talent." Since each of these judgments deals with a seventeenth century figure, the emphasis on that century seems justified.

Other studies, including Moreau, *Le classicisme des romantiques*, indicate some of the points made by Mr. Lynes; but he is the first person to make such an elaborate study of Chateaubriand as a critic of French literature. It is a well written, logical, and well documented piece of work.

Equally scholarly, but less attractively presented, is Mr. Walker's study of Chateaubriand's landscapes. He has examined the descriptions of nature of Chateaubriand's predecessors. Chief of these in the seventeenth century were not the great literary figures, who had either a conventional attitude toward nature or ignored it completely, but two missionaries, Dutertre and Tournefort, whose significance Chateaubriand the critic understood. Rousseau's, Delille's, and Bernardin de St. Pierre's landscapes, also known and admired by Chateaubriand, come under Mr. Walker's scrutiny. Disposing briefly of Chateaubriand's own ideas on the art of describing natural scenery, he analyzes in detail his practice and indicates the importance of sense perceptions in his landscapes. Shifting his attention from the vocabulary itself to the use the writer makes of it necessitates a further examination of sources. Finally he turns his attention to the landscapes in Chateaubriand's works, in a number of instances tracing the same landscape through its various developments from its earliest to its last appearance. Not content with all these comparisons of texts, he adds in an appendix a table of color notations, thus making a valuable addition to the study of Chateaubriand's vocabulary.

Mr. Walker concludes that Chateaubriand took from his predecessors the best of their art, combining and blending the various elements into an original and harmonious whole. The technique of his composition is artful and original and the use of his landscapes to motivate the action of his characters is new. This ambitious and

painstaking work elaborates upon the indications of a number of predecessors. It is the first study, however, devoted entirely to Chateaubriand's natural scenery.

In the course of such extensive quotation and intensive comparison of texts it is remarkable to find only one misprint, "perfering" on p. 67. There is some slight inconsistency in the notes in the matter of references. Sometimes a colon is used after the author's name, sometimes a comma. At times, too, the publisher or editor of the book is mentioned, more frequently omitted. The reviewer questions the expression, p. 42, "he roamed . . . among the beautiful natural scenery" and would correct, p. 148, "a drove of doves" to a flock.

Perhaps the wide scope of his study is the cause of its occasionally labored exposition. Mr. Lynes's subject, much more circumscribed, may lend itself more easily to a pleasing and charming style. Both books testify to the originality of Chateaubriand, indicate his contributions to the development of modern French literature, and thus perform a needed service.

META H. MILLER

Woman's College,  
University of North Carolina

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*Studies on Voltaire with Some Unpublished Papers of Mme du Châtelet.* By IRA O. WADE. Princeton University Press, 1947. ix + 244 pp. \$3.00.

This is in a sense a companion volume to Mr. Wade's previous illuminating book on *Voltaire and Mme du Châtelet*. It was made possible by his obtaining Mme du Châtelet's papers in photographic reproduction from the Leningrad Public Library the close reading of which led to the reinvestigation, clarification and solution of several interrelated problems. The study is divided into two parts as the title indicates. Part II contains a careful reproduction of Mme du Châtelet's unpublished "Translation of the *Fable of the Bees*" as well as *L'Essai sur l'optique* and *La grammaire raisonnée*. Part I deserves the attention of every Voltaire scholar. Mr. Wade begins with a study on Voltaire's *La Ligue* and De Renneville's *Vision*. This is a supplement to a previous article by the author (*MLN*, 1935, 209 ff.) in which positive proof is adduced of Voltaire's reading Adrien Baillet's *Auteurs déguisez* and of his utilizing Renneville's *Vision*. It is followed by two studies that are related: the *Genesis of the Ingénu* and *Voltaire and Mandeville*. In the first of these Mr. Wade re-examines Mr. W. R. Jones's findings as set forth in the introduction to his edition of the *Ingénu* and goes beyond them by developing the idea that Voltaire's initial inspira-

tion for the work comes from "Remark C" of Mandeville's *Fable of the bees* and concluding approximately, as does Jones, that the conte must not be classed in the current of primitivistic literature or Rousseauistic nature doctrine. In the second study we find a very valuable attempt at an accurate evaluation of Mandeville's influence upon Voltaire. Mr. Wade then takes up the *Genesis of the Mondain*. It is presented in a new light as a defense of luxury against the attacks of moralists of the 17th century—Pascal, La Bruyère, Fénelon. It might have been better had Mr. Wade started a new chapter here entitled "physics or metaphysics" to include the studies on the *Traité de Métaphysique* and the *Eléments de la philosophie de Newton*. His treatment of the *Traité* is the most definitive piece of work published on this neglected abstruse piece of reasoning. It shows the shortcomings of H. T. Patterson's edition. It establishes a new chronology for its composition and gives a penetrating analysis of its thought content. Chapter III, entitled "Mme du Châtelet's study on grammar," is rather modest and Mr. Wade is the first one to admit it.

No reviewer can do justice to Mr. Wade's book as no one is as well acquainted with the field as he. The exterior and interior evidence he produces to advance his points is astounding and his argumentation, although involved at times, is irrefutable. He has always something new to add to what has been done and redone. He is to be congratulated for this masterly piece of scholarship, and Princeton University should be commended for having a research fund to make such publications possible.

EMILE MALAKIS

The Johns Hopkins University

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*Der amerikanische Best-seller. Sein Wesen und seine Verbreitung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Schweiz.* Vol. 17 of the Schweizer Anglistische Arbeiten. By SONJA MARJASCH. Bern: Francke, 1946. Pp. 176. 10.50 s. fr.

Our Swiss colleagues from Zürich, Bern, and Basel are to be congratulated that their *Swiss Studies in English*, begun several years ago when intellectual cooperation with German and Austrian publishers became increasingly difficult, should include so many worth-while and interesting investigations.

Miss Marjasch's book is essentially a statistical and sociological rather than a literary piece of research. She deals with American and English best-sellers during the years 1937-1940 and within the frame thus set, she enumerates and exhausts, in a somewhat dry and unattractive first part, all possible definitions and variations of the

psychological, aesthetic, sociological and statistical best-sellers both of the fictional and the non-fictional type. The first part and the appended 35 lists of best-sellers arranged according to all possible viewpoints, and her 6 bibliographies of best-sellers in American, English and continental (translated) editions, constitute the most statistical pages of this at times rather mechanical investigation.

Far more attractive for the literary historian are the second and third parts (pp. 50-109), in which Miss Marjasch speaks of the popularity of the American best-sellers in England, France, Germany, Italy, and, above all, in Switzerland. England reprinted all but one of the best-sellers mentioned; Germany-Austria-Switzerland translated 60% of them, with the German censorship excluding political discussions and favoring escape literature instead (*Gone with the Wind*), and with Switzerland in turn favoring political books (*The Last Enemy*) and preferring English to American best-sellers (*How Green Was My Valley*); Italy followed third with 35% translated, giving preference to heroic and historical narratives; France, laying stress on literary quality, came last with 25% translated. The statements contained in the Swiss chapter are based upon a personal round-robin concerning 15 best-sellers sent around in the vicinity of Zürich; from the 445 replies received and classified in the best Gallup-fashion and from press-reviews, Miss Marjasch deduces various tentative generalisations, showing e. g. that the readers disagree with favorable criticisms in the press (*Rebecca*), that books like *How To Win Friends* are not taken seriously at all, rejected as "alien," "bearing a certain resemblance to the Oxford movement," that *Listen! The Wind* was received with an embarrassed silence, that *Oliver Wiswell* was criticized because its author was suspected to be an anti-Roosevelt pre-war isolationist, or that one-third of the best-sellers read in Switzerland are read in the original English version.

With her tongue in her cheek, Miss Marjasch at times makes some pertinent remarks about the quality of best-sellers or the literary standards of the reading public, about the rather far-fetched psychological differences between the American "best-seller" and the German "meistgelesen," about the American wish to read a book and the European wish to own and keep a book; but in spite of these remarks she does not approve of the aesthetes' customary condemnation of such books, for, she concludes, "Die Best-seller sind kulturelle Barometer unserer Zeit" which help us read and understand the trends of our era. Miss Marjasch's own predilection for the old classics and her aversion for our Age of Science which breeds best-sellers can occasionally be read only between the lines, for her main task was to interpret, not to evaluate what she investigated. In this she has succeeded very well.

W. P. FRIEDERICH

University of North Carolina

*The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography.* By FREDERICK J. HOFFMAN, CHARLES ALLEN, and CAROLYN ULRICH. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1946. Pp. ix + 440. \$3.75. Illus.

The first half of this book is devoted to a history of those "advance guard" magazines which, during the last thirty or forty years, have done much to stimulate new movements in American literature. Groups, movements, impulses, credos are pointed out and described, and the histories of fifty or more of the magazines are given in some detail. The second half of the book is devoted to a bibliography of about five hundred periodicals, with a brief historical summary appended to each. The bibliography of many of these publications is difficult, and the data recorded by Miss Ulrich are occasionally rather sketchy. Voluming is not attempted. Publishers are not given; they were, of course, often identical with the editors.

Much that has been written about the little magazines in the past has been controversial, and even combative, in tone, because the publications themselves have so often stood for revolt against the established order. The authors of these chapters, however, have maintained an excellent critical balance. They are aware of a vast deal of silliness in these magazines, but they are alert to point out the vital contributions made by many of them. Their work is based upon careful investigation, and it is about as thoroughgoing and sound an evaluation of the contribution of the little magazines to American society and literature as we are likely ever to have. Moreover, it is written with notable ease and urbanity, and its wealth of anecdote and witty quotations make for good reading.

Although little magazines have sometimes been mere experiments in amateur publishing and editing, the best of them have been moved to this experimentation in the amateur spirit by a sincere revolt against two evils of the established magazines—commercialism and conventional decorum. Rebellion against decorum is often sophomoric, and may lead to a bizarrerie which is significant not as art but only as rebellion.

All these movements, and movements within movements, which Messrs. Hoffman and Allen describe, are fascinating subject matter for the student of literary history. Many of them, to be sure, had little effect—or are we always sure just how much effect they may have had? In an age of confusion in esthetic theory they have added to the confusion. But the literary democrat who thinks that every "ism" should have its hearing is gratified by these many voices. And there is justification for the whole spate of little magazines in the real contribution that a score or so of them have made to modern American literature.



The studies in this book, competent and thoughtful as they are, form a helpful guide to an important phase of our literary history.

FRANK LUTHER MOTT

*University of Missouri*

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*Keats' Reputation in America to 1848.* By HYDER EDWARD ROLLINS. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1946. Pp. 1-147.

Tastefully designed and immaculate in scholarship, the first of the Harvard Memorial Keats Studies is an investigation of the reputation (not the influence) in this country of the poet and the man Keats up to the publication of Milnes' *Life, Letters, and Literary Remains, of John Keats . . .* in 1848. As of this date the gestation period of the poet's fame is considered over.

Early knowledge of Keats is discovered as a result of the Galignani edition of Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats issued at Paris in 1829. Thereafter, through the enthusiasm of an increasing number of literati, chief among whom was Nathaniel Willis of the *American Monthly Magazine*, and through the Philadelphia editions, the vogue of Keats was established in the East; the conjecture is that it passed into Western periodicals through the influence of George Keats, residing in Louisville, and the editor of the *Western Messenger* whom he knew.

The progress was not unopposed. Neo-classical taste was strong in America before the mid-century, and critical and sub-critical complaints were leveled against Romantic poets who made "mere visionary creations of the brain" into poetry and were supposed for that reason not to be poets "of the highest kind, unless we prefer Spenser to Shakespeare, or Keats to Pope." Equally diverting are the critical vagaries of Emerson, who grudgingly allowed Keats poetic genius but Shelley none, of Margaret Fuller basing her evaluation of Keats on the unique critical principle of a family squabble, of Whitman, who found him over-literary (as he could be expected to), of Poe, mercurial and doctrinaire, and of Lowell, idolatrous.

But these judgments do not reflect the American sentimentality at this time, which appears to have done as much as anything to enhance the vogue of Keats. Americans swallowed the legend of his being killed by brutal reviewers, quoted and requoted his self-dramatizing epitaph, visited his grave with their tourist's instinct for yearning over the lives and particularly the deaths of the English great. All this is not perhaps so significant as an index to the appreciation of Keats as it is to the American character of the day.

So that William Ellery Channing, Thoreau's biographer, summed up the situation neatly if tartly when he remarked of Keats and Shelley: "If these two Poets . . . shall live at all, must they not live in their Verses, which are better, let us hope, than their bones."

Bowdoin College

LAWRENCE SARGENT HALL

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### BRIEF MENTION

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*Niederdeutsche Mitteilungen.* Hrsg. v. d. Niederdeutschen Arbeitsgemeinschaft zu Lund. Jahrgang II (1946). Lund: Gleerup, 1946. Pp. 184. Only a short time ago (*MLN*, LXI, 569 f.) I was able to announce the launching of this new periodical devoted to research in Low German Linguistics and Literature. Now, the second Annual lies before me doubled in both size and importance. The most welcome contribution is a critical review by Gustav Korlén of Lund-University dealing with publications on the Low German dialects issued in Germany between 1939 and 1945. The Swedish scholar who is the legitimate authority since the decease of the Dioscours Borchling and Lasch gives us a brilliant survey of the work done during the war. This is all the more valuable since a regrettably large number of publications mentioned by Korlén did not reach our libraries. Some items seem to reflect the mentality of a nation at war; on the whole, however, even this 'total' war was not able to extinguish all the light of the humanities. The bulk of the book consists of studies in the Low German vocabulary, especially that of the fifteenth century as manifested in dictionaries, deeds, epigrams, proverbs. A fine article deals with Cod. C 495 of the University-Library at Uppsala which contains a most interesting *Psalter* which Vollmer in *Psalmenverdeutschung von den ersten Anfängen bis Luther* (Hamburg, 1931 ff.) mentioned, but did not use. Miss Grönlund, the author of the article, succeeds in finding traces of Mysticism in these Psalms, reflections of the *Devotio moderna* which had spread out all over Low Germany down to the Baltic. As expected, Miss Grönlund finds that the MS is related to those of Walther's groups 27, 28, and 31, and can be placed at Lübeck. The diplomatic reprint of five of the Psalms is most valuable and in agreement with the good policy of the editors who are to be praised for the reproduction of many original texts ranging from *chronicles* to *Reimsprüche*.

ARNO SCHIROKAUER

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*Mark Twain: The Letters of Quintus Curtius Snodgrass*, edited by ERNEST E. LEISY. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1946. \$2.00. The ten humorous sketches here reprinted appeared in the *New Orleans Daily Crescent* between January 21 and March 15, 1861, signed by Quintus Curtius Snodgrass. In 1934, Miss Brashear announced in *Mark Twain: Son of Missouri* her discovery of four of these letters and quoted extensively from them; since then Mr. Leisy and Mr. Thomas E. Dabney have uncovered six additional sketches. In editing the series of letters, Mr. Leisy has given detailed reasons for attributing them to Mark Twain.

His evidence, though circumstantial, is impressive. Most significant is Clemens' statement, quoted in Paine, that he once wrote for the *New Orleans Crescent*. In addition, he was in New Orleans when the letters were written; he had used the *nom-de-plume* Snodgrass in earlier journalism, though with a different given name (Thomas Jefferson); and his pilot friend Bixby stated that Clemens was involved in "Confederate service" before coming up the river. Moreover, the addressing of the letters to a mythical Brown offers a curious parallel to Clemens' later use of Brown as a "stooge" in California journalism. Many other parallels and references, less impressive, are cited. Internal evidence of style and taste are inconclusive; the sketches read something like Clemens' apprentice writing but not enough to convince this reviewer that they are indisputably his.

To draw biographical conclusions from these letters would be unwise without further proof of their authenticity. Moreover, if they belong to the Mark Twain canon, they add little to an understanding of his development as a writer; the six parodies of a military manual and the remaining accounts of an abortive raid on Baton Rouge, a military ball, an evening of dining out, and a visit to Lincoln are dull and uninspired even in terms of fugitive journalism.

FRANKLIN WALKER

Mills College

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*A Saintsbury Miscellany: Selections from his Essays and Scrap Books*. With Personal Portraits by SIR HERBERT GRIERSON and others and a Biographical Memoir by A. BLYTH WEBSTER. New York: OUP, 1947. Pp. x + 246. \$3.50. Students of literature will be familiar with most of the reprinted essays save for the address given by Saintsbury at his Edinburgh inaugural, but they will agree that the editors have chosen wisely and that the reprinted material exhibits G. S. at his best. The introductory pieces by Elton, Grierson, Purves, Oliver, and Webster are fascinating, for they provide us with a picture of Saintsbury as a reader, teacher,

writer, talker, and friend. Those of us who have complained, like Churton Collins, about his inaccuracies or who have been overwhelmed at times by his prolixity (faults that have been redeemed for some of us by the *Cellar Book*) can now understand better the man whom we never met. Saintsbury was the Samuel Johnson of his age—but a wiser man, a broader man, a kindlier man, and one, too, whose contributions to the study of English letters are both stimulating and enduring.

D. C. A.

### CORRESPONDENCE

MANUSCRIPT *H* OF *Berte aus grans piés*. In his recent edition of *Berte aus grans piés* (University of North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures n° 6, Chapel Hill, 1946), Professor Urban T. Holmes, Jr. has listed seven manuscripts of this thirteenth century Old-French poem, assigning to them the sigla *A-G*. An eighth manuscript should be added to the list: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, nouv. acq. fr. 6234.

An examination of manuscript *H*, as it seems expedient to call manuscript 6234, discloses the fact that five folios have disappeared from that part of *H* (ff. 1-17) which contains *Berte*, with the resulting loss of lines 1-121, 446-768, 1095-1256, 3360-3485. Folios 1, 2, 4, and 5 are mutilated, folio 5 so badly so that lines 1297-1376 have all but disappeared.

Manuscript *H* is very closely related to manuscript *B* (Paris, Bibl. Nat., f. fr. 778). In common with *B*, *H* omits lines 142, 177, 193, 278, 852, 906, 967, 1001, 1057, 1450-53, 1559, 1615, 1643, 1778, 1949, 2332, 2373, 2489, 2590, 2657-58, 2669, 2727, 2746, 2969, 3029, 3334, and inverts lines 1491 and 1490. Soundings taken at various places show that *BH* have readings peculiar to both of them in lines 134, 137, 140, 146, 155, 158, 780, 784, 786, 792, 794, 795, 797, 798, 808, 817, 823, 853, 912, 915, 965, 968, 1002, 1490, 1491, 1495, 1510, 1519, 1522, 1558, 1616, 1642, 2003, 2220, 2352, 2374, 2502, 2503, 2506, 2692, 3343, 3348, 3350, 3357. It is also worth noting that in both *B* and *H* *Berte* is found at the beginning of the manuscript and that Adenet le Roi's poem is immediately followed by Girard d'Amiens' *Charlemagne*.

The library of Charles V contained a manuscript, now lost, in which the two poems were similarly brought together.<sup>1</sup> Since *Charlemagne* was intended by its author as a sequel to *Berte*,<sup>2</sup> the idea of juxtaposing them is a perfectly natural one and the lost manuscript need not have belonged textually to the *BH* group of manuscripts.

ALFRED FOULET

Princeton University

<sup>1</sup> See Léopold Delisle, *Recherches sur la librairie de Charles V*, II, Paris, 1907, pp. 189-190, n° 1160.

<sup>2</sup> See Gaston Paris, in *Hist. litt. de la France*, 31 (1893), p. 202.

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